

# PL

75¢

PROGRESSIVE LABOR

Vol. 7, No. 1

February - March 1978



FRANCE: may 1968  
**WORKERS REBEL!**

# Send for PLP Publications

## CHALLENGE-DESAFIO

Newspaper in English and Spanish reporting and analyzing struggles from the shops, campus and communities ..... 1 year—\$5.00

## PL MAGAZINE

Magazine of political analysis ..... 6 issues —\$3.50—Single issue—75c

## PAMPHLETS, BOOKS, RECORDS

1. **30 FOR 40** ..... 10c  
The historic struggle for the shorter workday; why we need a six-hour day with eight hours pay now—and a strategy to win it.
2. **SIT DOWN—The Great Flint Sit-Down Strike Against General Motors 1936-1937** ..... 25c  
How the auto workers occupied the GM plants for 44 days and nights and won industrial unionism in the CIO.
3. **REVOLUTION, U.S.A.** ..... \$2.00  
Strategic ideas for revolutionary struggles in the U.S., a collection of basic PLP articles in recent years (366-page book).
4. **STRIKE** ..... 10c  
Exploding all the bosses' lies about particular groups of striking workers and analyzing their various strike-breaking strategies, this pamphlet presents a program of action to win strikes both for the strikers themselves and those supporting a particular strike.
5. **WHO RULES THE UNITED STATES?** ... (temporarily out of print) ... 50c  
The facts behind the real owners of the U.S.—the bosses, bankers, and interlocking directorates who run this country.
6. **THE PLP LP** ..... \$2.80  
Available in 8-track tape. A long-playing record containing songs of workers' struggles, and of revolution, many sung by the participants in "motown" and "folk" style.
7. **ROAD TO REVOLUTION III** ..... 50c  
The general line of the PLP. Available in Spanish.
8. **THE PHILADELPHIA TEACHERS' STRIKE AND THE BATTLE FOR 30 FOR 40** ..... 10c  
The lessons of the Philadelphia teachers' strike of 1973.
9. **RACISM RUINS MEDICINE (Second Edition)** ..... 50c  
A systematic indictment of racist and medical practices in the U.S.

10. **RACISM, INTELLIGENCE AND THE WORKING CLASS** ..... 25c  
An incisive criticism of the latter-day Nazi theoreticians.
11. **THE DECLINE AND FALL OF FUN CITY** ..... 25c  
A PLP analysis of the NYC crisis.
12. **THUNDER IN THE MINES** ..... 10c  
The Miller UMW Machine—Blueprint for Fascism.
13. **THE BASIC IDEAS OF MARXISM-LENINISM** ..... 50c  
Introduction to Communist ideas. Available in Spanish.
14. **WIN WITH MARXISM-LENINISM** ..... Discount Price 25c  
A PLP cartoon book. Spanish-English.
15. **SMASH APARTHEID!** ..... 25c  
The anti-apartheid struggle: in South Africa and the U.S.
16. **TURN THE GUNS AROUND! DEFEAT U.S. IMPERIALISM!** ..... 25c  
The case of the black Marines who fought the KKK at Camp Pendleton, and the need for communists to organize in the bosses' armed forces to smash fascism and imperialist war.
17. **END SLAVE LABOR WELFARE WITH SOCIALIST REVOLUTION** .. 25c  
Trends in the welfare system and how to build a worker-client alliance for revolutionary change.

## PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

Box 808  
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Send **CHALLENGE-DESAFIO** 1 year—\$5.00  
**PL MAGAZINE** (Current Issue) 75c; 1 year—\$3.50

## PAMPHLETS, BOOKS, RECORDS:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State ..... Zip .....

Union and Local, or School ..... Unemployed .....

Enclosed is \$ .....

# In This Issue

France:  
May '68

7

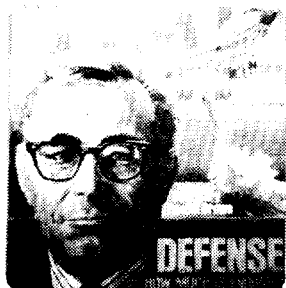


Albania

Capitalism's  
Crisis

24

41



Imperialist  
Alliances

60

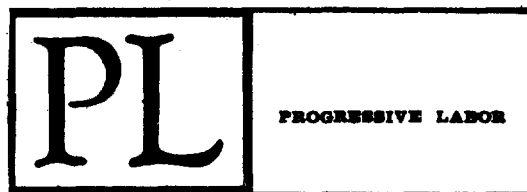
Notes and Comments 2

'On Nationalism' 48

Reviews 35, 38, 52

The articles appearing in PL Magazine are published because the editorial board believes they are generally useful to the political ideological development of the international revolutionary communist movement. However, only the editorials and documents of the National Committee of PLP represent the official policies of the Party

Front Cover: Paris Barricade, May, 1968



Published by the Progressive Labor Party

PROGRESSIVE LABOR: G.P.O. Box 808  
BROOKLYN, N.Y. 11201

## To Contact PLP:

**National Office:**  
**PROGRESSIVE  
LABOR  
PARTY**  
220 E. 23rd St. - 7th Fl.  
New York City 10010

Lansing: P.O. Box 332  
E. Lansing, Mich. 48823

**MISSOURI:**  
St. Louis: P.O. Box 2915  
St. Louis, Mo. 63130  
Kansas City: P.O. Box 23021  
Kansas City, Mo. 64141

**NEW JERSEY:**  
Newark: P.O. Box 6085  
Newark, N.J. 07106

**NEW YORK:**  
Buffalo: P.O. Box 52  
Norton Union, SUNYAB  
Buffalo, N.Y. 14215  
New York City: P.O. Box 808  
Brooklyn, NY 11201-7th floor  
220 E. 23rd St., NYC 10010  
Suffolk County: P.O. Box 356  
E. Setauket, NY 11733

**NORTH CAROLINA:**  
Durham: P.O. Box 3172  
Durham, N.C. 27705

**OHIO:**  
Cleveland: P.O. Box 2579  
E. Cleveland, Ohio 44112  
Columbus: P.O. Box 02074  
Station B  
Columbus, Ohio 43202  
Cadiz: P.O. Box 176  
Cadiz, Ohio 43907

**PENNSYLVANIA:**  
Philadelphia: P.O. Box 1224  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19105  
Pittsburgh: P.O. Box 4750  
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15206

**TEXAS:**  
Houston: P.O. Box 8540  
Houston, Tex. 77009

**WASHINGTON:**  
Seattle: P.O. Box 24182  
Seattle, Wash. 98124

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:**  
P.O. Box 3081  
Washington, D.C. 20010

**WISCONSIN:**  
Madison: P.O. Box 3232  
Madison, Wisc. 53704

**ARKANSAS:**  
Little Rock: Box No. 1562  
Little Rock, Ark. 77203  
**CALIFORNIA**  
Los Angeles: P.O. Box 20427  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90006  
San Diego: Box 14103  
San Diego, Calif. 92114  
San Francisco: Box 562  
San Francisco, Calif. 94101  
Sacramento: Box 5297  
Sacramento, Calif. 95817

**ILLINOIS**  
Chicago: Box 7814  
Chicago, Ill. 60680

**INDIANA**  
Gary: Box 2052  
Gary, Ind. 46409

**KANSAS:**  
Wichita: P.O. Box 3082  
Wichita, Kansas 67201  
**MARYLAND**  
Baltimore: P.O. Box 13426  
Baltimore, Md. 21203

**MASSACHUSETTS**  
Boston: P.O. Box 512  
Kenmore Sta., Boston, Mass  
02215  
Worcester: Box 485  
West Side Station  
Worcester, Mass.

**MINNESOTA**  
Minneapolis: Box 9524  
Minneapolis, Minn. 55440

**MICHIGAN:**  
Detroit: P.O. Box 85  
Detroit, Mich. 48221

Subscription rates: \$3.50 per six issues, 75¢ per issue.  
Airmail subscription rates:  
USA North and South America - \$10  
Europe (excluding Eastern Europe) - \$12  
Asia Africa Middle East Oceania and Eastern  
Europe - \$15

# notes & comments & notes & comments & notes

## Short Story—I

Comrades:

The appearance of the short story "May Day 1975" in the November issue of **PL Magazine** is both a welcome and a thought-provoking event. As one of the very first pieces of fiction to be written about our party and for the magazine, the story is bound to attract a lot of discussion. That's great, but it would be a big mistake if complaints about its shortcomings were to dominate over constructive criticism that will help the author—and the rest of us—do an even better job next time.

Why do we need to write and read stories such as this one, and what standards should we use to evaluate it? When it comes to bourgeois books and movies, many of the reviews published in **Challenge** and **PL Magazine** have correctly pointed out that their purpose is mainly to push bourgeois ideas: capitalism, racism, cynicism, greed.

Well, the purpose of proletarian art like "May Day 1975" is parallel, but opposite: to spread revolutionary, pro-working-class ideas like the need to overthrow the bosses, the leadership of minority workers in that struggle.

In that sense, a short story appearing in **PL Magazine** should be judged no less than any other article that appears there by the editor's note in the table of contents: "The articles," it says, "are published because... they are generally useful to the political development of the international revolutionary communist movement."

The writer of "May Day 1975" has clearly tried to serve that goal by putting forward revolutionary ideas in a fictional situation. But one of the problems with the story is that it tries to make too many political points in too short a space. As a result, the writer is not able to dramatize the ideas sufficiently to capture our imagination.

An example of this is the opening scene at the **PL** meeting in New York to discuss the march. A series of characters is presented, but they are little more than mouth-

pieces for speeches that show various political lines—some correct, some incorrect. What little space is given to describing the characters is pretty much just stereotyping. A woman is "very pretty," another has "fleshy hips," a transit worker is "a big powerful man."

As a result, the scene does not come to life as a believable picture of a meeting.

This same failure to dramatize ideas carries over the main plot—the conflict between Chris' personal and political lives. Chris herself and her boyfriend, Lawrence, need to be presented in more depth. The writer seems unclear just who Chris is—she's first described as a "rehabilitation therapist," but later is shown at work as a "psychiatric aide." This is a small point, but we never really get to know what Chris' background is, what made her a communist.

Presumably, the writer meant to show her with a solid base among her co-workers at the hospital, yet the scene during the fight against the layoffs consists mainly of Chris running about frantically, seeking advice only from her club leader, not from her fellow workers.

"We have to start a petition," she tells her co-workers at one point. "I want you all to help me spread word of it." Don't we as communists need to develop our plan of action with other workers, instead of deciding the main strategy and then condescendingly trying to "involve" them later?

When it comes to Lawrence, he is shown to be so hostile to the party from the beginning that we wonder how Chris could have put up with him this far—even if he is attractive and sexy. His very first words to her are to put down the meeting and suggest she's being manipulated. Every time we see him, he is lying around lazily or eating. He even tries to make Chris miss work, though it's not clear whether he has a job or is rich.

The point is not that communists don't have weaknesses or feel a desire to escape. Of course we do, and a story that deals with those problems can be useful to

everyone involved in struggle. But in "May Day 1975" the terms of the struggle are too oversimplified to convince us that it could happen in real life.

The writer has done many good things in the story: the plot has enough action to hold our interest, and interweaving it with the real march in Boston is a good device. Twelve pages just isn't enough space to do justice to everything the writer is trying to say, however, and next time, a narrower focus (or a longer story) will surely meet with better results.

A Reader

## Something Rotten

Comrades:

The day-to-day skirmishes with capitalism—wild-cat strikes, picket lines, protest marches—are important parts of the workers' movement for liberation. The militant communist spirit has to be visible and helpful in gaining however small victories on the road to the ultimate victory of the proletariat over capitalism.

The communist revolution, to succeed in wresting power out of the hands of the bosses and keeping it, has to be a conscious act of an informed and ready-for-action-and-sacrifices class—the working class. Every thinking proletarian, even without having studied or read the works of Marx and Engels, realizes that "there is something rotten in Denmark" (for "Denmark" one substitutes, of course, the U.S., England, Canada, etc.). All this escalating unemployment, endless spiralling of prices, insecurity, ROAR's attacks in Boston, San Diego's KKK outrages, San Francisco's "Zebra" killings, Chicago Nazi street fights, all the political scandals in Washington, the Water-gate affair, the congressmen's and senators' mistresses on public payroll as secretaries, night swims with nude dancers in the Reflecting Pool under the sorrowful gaze of Abe Lincoln, Korean bribes, budget director's shady bank transactions; all the enormous spread of pornography, prostitution, drug addiction, satanism, spiritualism, occultism and all kinds of ob-

scurantism—all this shows that, like Imperial Rome in its last days, imperialist U.S. capitalism is tottering on the brink of disaster—moral, economic, international.

The capitalist mass-media, their dailies, radio, TV, try to convince us that the “Godless Soviet Union” is after our American skin. Mind you, not “Godless Red China”—for the moment, at least—but the Russians are plotting to start WWII by viciously attacking the United States with atom bombs and missiles. At the same time they boast that they have a big edge over the Russian Reds: for every A-bomb and missile they have the Pentagon has thirty-five of its own. In other words, if they dare wipe us once, we can wipe them 35 times.

This is the kind of logic, and propaganda, Hitler was spreading before attacking the Soviet Union in 1941.

Yes, the more one thinks about it the more absurd it sounds. Why should the Soviet Union, which is so eager to trade with the U.S. and tries to appease the capitalists everywhicway, start a suicidal adventure against a mighty military adversary, when all is going so well for it. In the Soviet Union there is no unemployment, prices are not rising, inflation is not raging, there is no crime in the streets, no prostitution, no drug addiction, no youth alienation. Whatever lagging behind they have in achieving true socialism, the Soviets have eliminated much of the inequality and privileges of the past, and will not risk foolishly an unnecessary imbroglio. They know that time works in their favor and against the capitalists.

The President's main worry now, in the arena of foreign policy, is to defend the human rights in the Soviet Union. The human rights of whom? Of a psychopathological renegade like Solzhenytsin? No, he doesn't give a damn about him—neither he nor his predecessor consented to receive him in the White House—or Dudintsev, or whoever is trying to make a name for himself as “defender of God.” It is the issue that is important. “Human rights” is merely a code word for anti-communism. It keeps the scare of the **Commies** in the minds of the naive **petit-bour-**

**geoisie**, and warms the hearts of the Archie Bunkers and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Capitalism is on the edge of the precipice but it won't topple by itself, far from it. This needs a mighty push from within.

The student-worker alliance is very important. It is not merely a sentimental siding of honest young men and women with the exploited masses, with the victims of social injustice. It arises out of firm conviction and understanding that the working class, as a whole, is the single and final arbiter in a long historical process. The dictatorship of the proletariat, which scared so much the good old French bourgeois and the Italian peasants that their respective “communist” parties had to renounce this principle, is a necessary first step in reorganizing the capitalist society. Obviously, after all other hostile classes, subclasses and segments are eliminated, there will be no need of any kind of “dictatorship.”

There are workers who may be misled, into the fake unions for instance, or “unconcerned with politics”—although there is no such thing, as the very indifference of a worker to his fate plays into the hands of the bosses—but as a

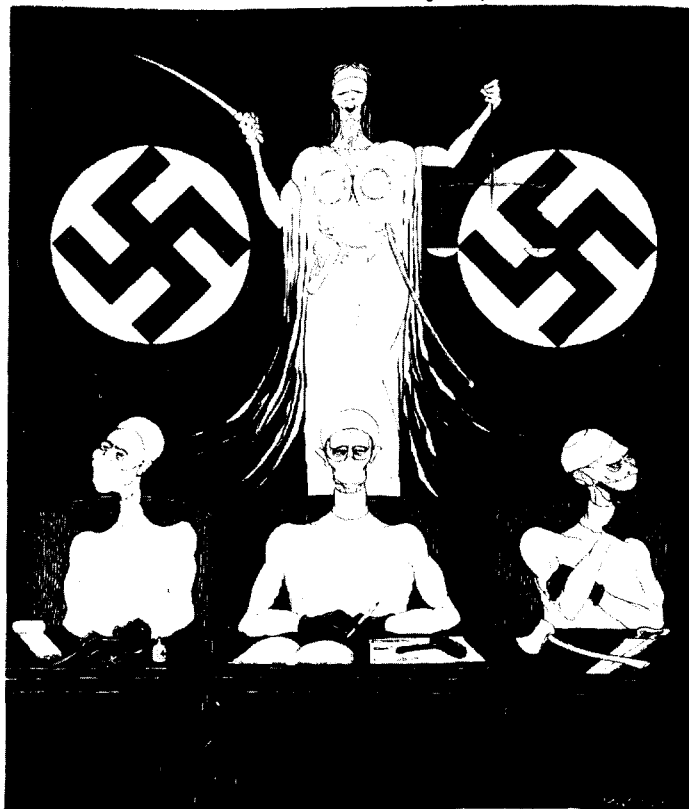
class they are aware in their role and their duty.

In the final analysis, workers will be the rescuers of all that is worth saving in human history.

It is clear to any communist that any illusions about a gradual reform for the better under capitalism is just that—a nebulous mirage. Clear example is the case in Chile. A Marxist candidate was allowed to become President. He was allowed to go only that far. When he tried to exceed the limits, the local gentry, with the covert support of the CIA, shot him, and his associates, to pieces—with a cannon.

Nor would the revolution occur by itself.

There is a fascinating book, which every communist should find and read, entitled **Witness**. It was written by Whittaker Chambers, the man who fingered Alger Hiss and helped Nixon win his first political victory in HUAC. Chambers reneged in later life, converted to Christianity (like Eldridge Cleaver) and became staunch Republican and bosom friend of that mighty intellect, the TV entertainer Bill Buckley. He ended in taking his own life on his farm Cold Friday. Sad and sordid as his story is, there is a small part—



about 100 or so pages, out of 808—which is one of the best writings in American literature on par with the best John Steinbeck and Mark Twain ever wrote. These are three short chapters, entitled: 2. Story of a middle-class family. 3. Outrage. 4. The Communist Party.

As a staff writer on the **Daily Worker** in the early thirties, Chambers relates how he and his colleagues would eagerly listen to the radio giving news about riots in a small town, or veterans' march on Washington DC. "Each time," he writes, "we thought—this is it: the Revolution has started! And we'd start jumping up and down embracing each other and singing." Quite stirring a picture of the revolutionary mood in the whole country in the 1930s; very reminiscent of the mood today.

However, men and women, whether steel workers and mine workers with calloused hands and black lungs, or covered-with-mud farm hands, or poor students starving between classes, should consciously work for the goal, not wait for it to happen miraculously. Neither would it happen by hit and run tactics.

We cannot condone terrorist activities, because they are sporadic, haphazard commando raids, which might annoy the enemy but not win the war.

Marxist analysis of capitalism's structure, its strength and its weak spots, and Lenin's critique of the bourgeois state give us pretty clear broad lines of how to organize, lead and win the ultimate campaign. It is clear to all of us that a party has to be built up, with true and dedicated members. Men and women full of two feelings: hatred and love. Hatred for the greedy and exploiting, and love for every comrade.

The workers need all the support they can get. But all the aid has to come on our terms, i.e., no compromises, but conversion.

Capitalism is now where feudalism stood in 1789, or czarism in 1917. But rising with arms in the streets against well-trained police and heavily armed National Guardsmen and federal and state troops would be suicidal. Barricades could hardly hold today

# So *THAT'S* it!

## Congressmen reported too busy to think

—Headline in Cleveland Plain Dealer

against howitzers and bazookas, not to speak of armored cars, tanks and helicopters. And the desperate, losing-the-battle bosses and their lackeys will throw all this against us when we raise the red flag and, singing the **Internationale**, converge on city halls, governors' mansions, capitols, when we capture radio stations, TV stations, newspaper offices and print shops.

An uprising therefore should rely on the backing of the entire population and the defection of police and military to our side. Every day and every hour, every minute of his 12-hour wake period, the communist uses it in talking, explaining, testing carefully, enlightening and converting to the truths of Marxism, every friend, neighbor, acquaintance. Pupils in the high schools should be the first to be taught to believe and work for communism. They are tomorrow's policemen and guardsmen. The tragic clash at Kent University, the murder of the four Kent students by National Guardsmen, would have never happened, if the ruling class had not succeeded in creating an unnatural antagonism between the rural youth and the city kid; between the "uneducated" and the "intellectual."

Anti-intellectualism has no place in the workers' movement. There is only anti-capitalism, or anti-communism. There is no other choice. And the anti-capitalism will win because there are more of us than there are of them.

We should bear in mind also another very important possibility. Each time capitalism is pushed to the wall, it reacts violently. It is explained clearly by dialectical materialism. History witnessed

it in Germany, in Italy and Spain in the thirties. Fascism, which is militant capitalism, takes over openly. We shouldn't be lulled into false security. Today, due mainly to the mass revulsion and protest of the entire population against the ruling class' aggressive war in Vietnam and the unsavory Watergate affair, there is some modicum of freedom of the press and freedom of speech and congregation. But let's not fool ourselves. Any moment the McCarthy atmosphere, with its red-baiting, witch-hunting, black-listings, firings, and arresting and imprisoning dissidents, could return in full swing.

The revolutionary communist is prepared for such a contingency. He thinks ahead. He organizes cells of 2-3 of his most trusted comrades, who could go underground if fascism goes berserk.

The better educated communist teaches and explains the theory of communism, its history and development; how it works in other countries, and how it should work in our country, corresponding to our own temperament and mores. It is not a question of "intellectualism" and "plain folks." What is an intellectual? It is an individual who has had some schooling, but mainly on his own, reads and thinks. This in itself is neither good nor bad. The important criteria is where he stands in the struggle—on the side of the workers against the capitalists, or on the side of exploitation and oppression.

Let us not forget—this is not a game we are playing, it is a most serious undertaking: a struggle of life and death.

J. S.

## Short Story-II

To the Editor:

I really enjoyed the short story published in the October-November (1977) issue of PL magazine. It was moving and inspiring and I couldn't put it down from start to finish. I thought it was particularly appropriate to put the story after the article on dialectics because it illustrated so many points about dialectics. Foremost it showed the DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE that occurs in human beings as a result of the class struggle. It shows how even so important a thing as "love" changes, in this case from bourgeois-romantic-individualistic love to proletarian love, a love that brings us closer to the class struggle rather than farther away from it. The story illustrates that this development occurs as the result of the struggle between these two OPPOSITE conceptions of love. It shows how at first the proletarian concept of love appears EXTERNAL while the bourgeois concept of love is INTERNAL, natural, inborn. The story shows that on the basis of the DEVELOPMENT of the PROCESS of the class struggle, CONSCIOUSNESS CHANGES. The OPPOSITES INTERPENETRATE, CHANGE PLACES: the bourgeois concept of love becomes artificial, imposed, and external while the proletarian concept seems natural and internal.

It is a reflection of this story's fidelity and faithfulness to life and material reality that it so well illustrates even more dialectical concepts than those mentioned above. Someone once said that the best textbook of dialectics is the first volume of *Capital*, by Karl Marx. This is because reality, real life, is the best teacher. The story, MAY DAY, 1975 should be followed by many more such. We understand reality and ourselves when, and only when, we participate in practical revolutionary activity to change the world we live in, including ourselves.

A Brooklyn Comrade

## 'Spontaneism'

To the Editor:

The last issue of PL (Vol. 10, No. 5) contains an excellent letter (PP. 7-11) asking and trying to answer the question: what weaknesses in the communist movement prior to 1935 paved the way for the revisionist line of United Front against Fascism? The writer argues that the communist movement embraced the revisionist theory of productive forces: that



the development of technology made the downfall of capitalism inevitable; hence workers would spontaneously flock to communism when capitalism had decayed enough. I believe that the writer is right that spontaneism (the view that the workers will spontaneously

revolt and overthrow capitalism) is a key weakness in the pre-1935 movement. Spontaneism greatly underestimates the decisive role of political struggle within the working class as the determinant of revolution.

Nevertheless, there is an important weakness in the letter. The writer scoffs at the "theory of productive forces," the view that the development of the forces of production (plants, machinery, technology) make the downfall of capitalism inevitable. But he does not say positively what role the productive forces play in history; his letter leaves open an idealist interpretation of history: that the form of society is determined ultimately by the ideas people hold. Such an interpretation (which I am sure the writer does not intend) is the opposite of historical materialism.

What is a communist view? When, thousands of years ago, the development of technology reached a point where people could produce a surplus beyond what the working members of society needed to survive, society became split into classes: the exploited and exploiters who lived off the surplus produced by others. There was constant struggle between the exploiting classes and the exploited (class struggle), and this struggle led to new forms of economic organization (for example, the supplanting of slave society by feudalism and of feudalism by capitalism). These forms of economic organization are called the relations of production. New relations of production supplant old as the old relations of production become unable to utilize new and developing forces of production (technologies). But all of this is a result of class struggle. If the bourgeoisie did not fight to break up feudalism, feudalism would still exist. If the working class does not fight for socialism, capitalism will continue.

Marxism says that the development of society toward communism is an historical inevitability, based on the struggle of classes and the development of the forces of production. Such a view may seem simply a restatement of "the revisionist theory of productive forces." Such a theory as I have

presented can lead to spontaneism and mechanical materialism: the view that since the revolution is inevitable we don't have to organize it or that all we have to do is call for revolution. But it **need** not lead to such a distortion. The **possibility** of such a distortion should not lead us to abandon the materialist theory of history along with its distortion. (Don't throw out the baby with the bathwater.)

The distortion comes from a misunderstanding of the relation between the objective factor (the forces and relation of production, the political organization of society) and the subjective factor (the ideas people hold) in history. The best statement of our party's view is in PL magazine, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Road to Revolution III), pp. 51-3. Over the long haul people's ideas are determined by the actual organization of society. However, in any particular historical era the pace, timing, and development of revolution are determined by the subjective factor. Before the middle of the nineteenth century the forces of production had not developed to the point where communist revolution was possible anywhere. Once we enter the 20th century, we enter the era of imperialism, of capitalism in decay; now the determinant of revolution is the subjective one: are the workers won to and organized for revolution? Only in Russia was this the case during the first world war; so only in Russia was there revolution. The key elements in

the subjective factor were the understanding of the need for armed revolution, for international working class unity, and for a revolutionary communist party to organize and lead the revolution. How long must we suffer before there is revolution? This is determined by how fast we build our party and its outlook among the working class!!

But the growth of our party and its ideas do not fall from the sky. They arise from the development of modern industrial forces of production and capitalist relations of production. Because of the tendency of the rate of profit to decline (because of class struggle), capitalism cannot continue to expand production but chokes it back (depression). It tries to force us to accept its depression by instituting fascism. Ultimately it must destroy the forces of production in war. Capitalism cannot lead to the continued development of production to meet the needs of humanity, and thus its replacement by the system of socialism is inevitable. But it is inevitable only because it is inevitable that people like us will eventually understand facts like those above. We will understand their consequences for us and our class. We will organize PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY (and other communist organizations in other countries) and make the revolution happen!!

The material basis of revolution is the development of the forces of production and the con-

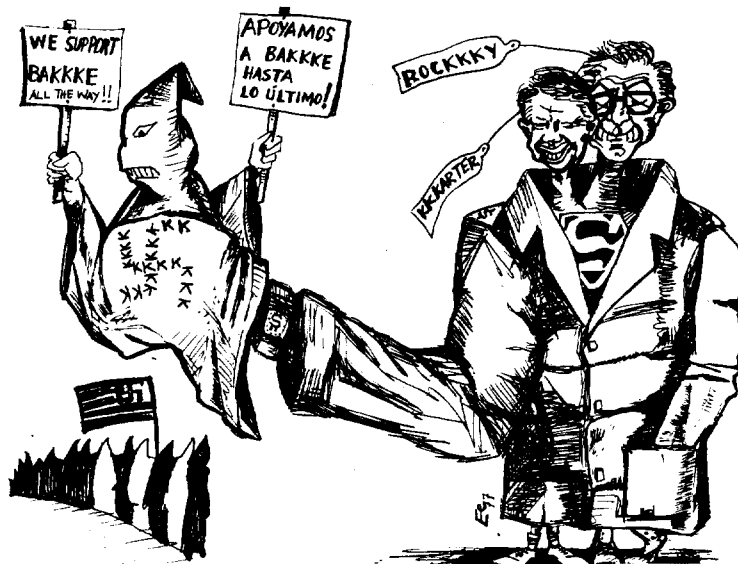
tradiction between modern forces of production and capitalist relations of production. This contradiction leads to suffering for our class. Understanding this does not have to lead to the false view that revolution will occur spontaneously or independently of the subjective factor.

A final note: the writer says that prior to 1935 the Comintern was "permeated with revisionist theory." I think we should be cautious in distinguishing between the secondary weaknesses in the communist movement which paved the way for revisionism (e.g. stage theory of revolution, economic determinism, etc.) and revisionism fullblown when the weaknesses have become primary and destroyed the party. Unless we do this we can take a very arrogant attitude toward those communists whose struggles (and errors) have enabled us to advance and know more than they could.

Comradely,  
A St. Louis PL member

### ... correction

'The Last Word' in the Oct.-Nov. 1977 issue of PL was originally written by Eric Norden in an article called 'The Tender Tyranny of American Liberals,' which first appeared in the *Realist*, June 1966.





# FRANCE: may 1968

## **WORKERS REBEL!**

“We just wanted to force an opening. The whole wall caved in.”

—from an interview given to *Le Monde*  
by a striking worker, May 1968.

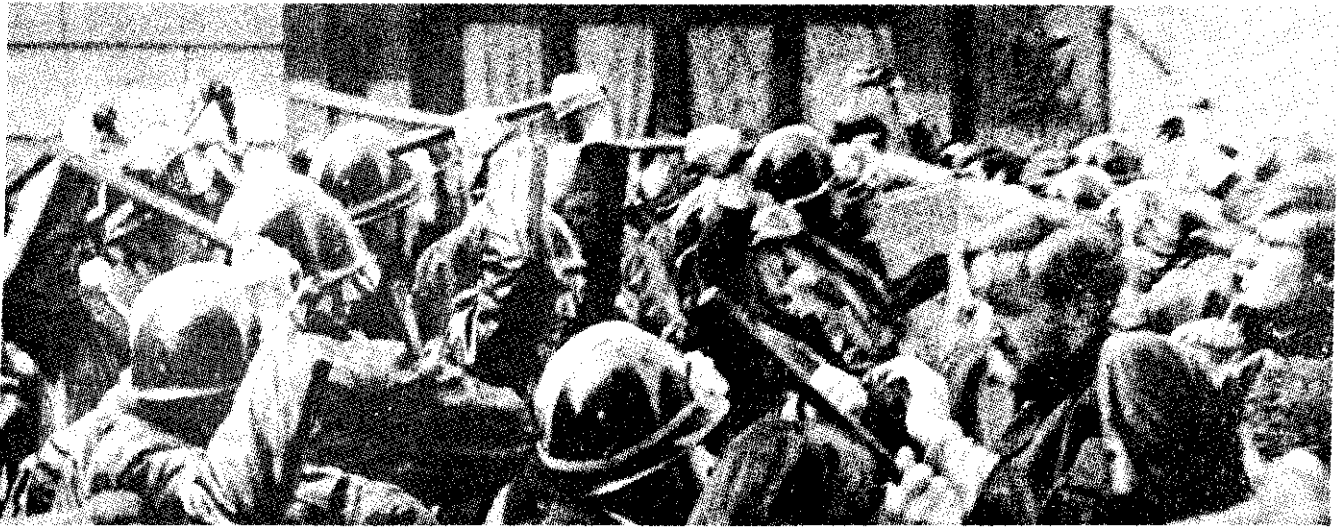
After the Revolution of 1848 and the Paris Commune, Marx and Engels wrote that France appeared to be the country where the contradictions of capitalism were pushed to their limits first.

The events of May-June 1968—student revolts followed by a massive general strike that paralyzed the economy for a month—demonstrate that 100 years of capitalism since the Commune have done nothing to diminish the potential for revolutionary violence against the profit system in France.

However, the significance of “May” is not limited to the geographical particularity of the French nation. In 1968, France was in every sense a “modern” capitalist state. Despite the backwardness of its agricultural sector, the over-centralization of its bureaucracy (particularly in the nationally-run education system), and a number of Napoleonic anachronisms, France was a highly industrialized society whose ruling class was attempting to make a successful transition between colonialism and more modern forms of imperialism. Thus, the contradictions present in France in 1968 were and remain the same essential contradictions of all contemporary capitalist societies.

It is valuable for our party to study “May” because, although differences are inevitable, the French experience can give us a clear idea of the conditions that, in this general historical period, can create an objective situation favorable to armed insurrection.

The present paper will attempt a broad general sketch of events as they happened. It will try to draw key lessons from the struggle, including: the worker-student alliance, the need for a Marxist-Leninist party, the need for the party to train both workers and students for revolutionary armed insurrection, the need to procure arms in advance, the role of revisionism, the fundamental weakness of the bourgeoisie in the period of western imperialism’s decline, and the **absolute** inevitability of the revolutionary process.



Students Battle Cops, Paris.

The revolt of 1968, like all developments, involved a transformation of quantity into quality. As we know from history, the French working class has a long tradition of violent class struggle that runs from the "Jacquerie" (13th Century peasant rebellions) through the Revolution of 1789-93 through 1830 through 1848 through the Commune through the anti-Nazi Resistance.

Recent French trade union history (since World War II) reveals two tendencies: one, militant and violent, with fights against the police, mass arrests, many casualties on both sides, revolts beyond the factory gates, imprisonment by strikers of high administrative personnel, etc.; the other, a "symbolic" tendency encouraged by the "Communist" Party-controlled CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail), that prefers one-hour slow-downs to walkouts and "limited strikes" to unconditional ones. Despite efforts by the CGT and its competitor the CFDT (a union comprising all factions on the official so-called "left" except the PCF), the French proletariat has always viewed violence as the meat and potatoes of the class struggle.

In 1955, only 13 years before "May," the western part of France was the scene of several warlike strikes that led to widespread rebellion. It was during the brutal repression of these strikes that the C.R.S. (the ironically-named "Compagnie Républicaine de Sécurité," France's national equivalent of local T.P.F.s in the U.S.) earned its reputation as the storm-troop of the French bourgeoisie's police forces.

Closer to the events that concern us, the outbreak of 1968 was foreshadowed by a series of important strikes in the preceding 12-month period. A strike broke out in the iron and steel works of Lorraine (near Germany) in 1967. The CGT moved to take control of it, then broke it after three weeks. In one more week, the strike might have won.

In the spring of 1967, a strike against layoffs hit Rhodiacéta, a synthetic fibre subsidiary of

the chemical giant Rhône-Poulenc. Acting independently of both the CGT and the CFDT, workers on the morning shift at Besançon refused to work and occupied the factory canteen, starting an "unlimited" walkout that lasted for roughly one month. The CGT had more power in Lyon than in Besançon and was therefore able to water down the Lyon strike's unlimited character by declaring daily 24-hour strikes that didn't involve the occupation of the factory. As a result of the Besançon action, the bosses were eventually forced to grant certain concessions, including a 5% wage increase and the inclusion of certain bonuses in the regular salary package. Nonetheless, the unions had a difficult time persuading the rank and file to end the strike. Many shift-workers had unresolved grievances around working conditions; the unions promised these would be discussed "later."

The promise was not kept, and trouble broke out throughout the year. In December, the bosses announced layoffs, bonus reductions, cuts in family allowances, etc. The workers responded with a series of wildcats and the company countered with a C.R.S.-enforced lockout. After the return to work, 92 shiftworkers were fired, of whom nearly 80 were union members or known militants. The bosses had won a round at Rhodiacéta, but the workers were left with a smouldering bitterness that would soon erupt again.

The events at Le Mans that took place in the fall of 1967 are even more indicative of the mood that characterized the French working class prior to the 1968 outbreaks. The western part of France, with its large agricultural population, has always been one of the country's most oppressed sections. On October 2, a series of demonstrations by agricultural workers turned into a bloody confrontation with the cops. Young workers played a leading role. On October 26, after a CGT- and CFDT-sponsored Action Week, the two unions had called for a strike and demonstrations in

Le Mans. The prefect of police had banned all demonstrations downtown, but 15,000 strikers went to five assembly points on the outskirts. Early in the morning, 5,000 Renault workers and others set up a barricade and fought the cops with slings for two hours. That afternoon, other workers broke through a police barrier and from then on until late in the night, savage street fighting took place all over Le Mans. Twenty C.R.S. cops were injured. Many women were at the assembly points, and the fighting was led by young workers and students who had come to support them.

Clearly, although the French bourgeoisie and its loyal opposition in the PCF were too myopic and wishful-thinking to be objective, the events at Le Mans and Rhodiacéta were a taste of things to come. And they were not the only straws in the wind. SAVIEM, the Renault truck division in Caen (Normandy) was hit by a strike that dragged on with sporadic worker-student violence until a couple of months before May 1968.

As one writer on the subject has remarked, when the students of Nanterre lit the fuse of revolt on March 22, 1968, the powder all over France was very dry indeed.<sup>1</sup>

### THE STUDENTS

A combination of internal and external circumstances had ripened the French student movement for the revolt that first erupted at Nanterre. Despite a lot of the nonsense that has been written about "May," the student strike in France was directly related to the major class struggle taking place in the world at the time, notably the Vietnam war and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

The French students were particularly suited to take up the banners of struggle against imperialism, because many thousands of their predecessors had participated in the fight against the French bourgeoisie's colonial war in Algeria.

The PCF had already shown its true colors in the beginning of the Algerian war, when it refused to lead actions against the draft, even though thousands of draftees had gone so far as to block troop trains. The PCF's rationale was that French workers were "too racist" against Arab people to actively oppose a colonial war.\*

For many of the same reasons that led American students to oppose the Vietnam war (anti-imperialist aspirations, knowledge that a "rich

1. Gretton, p. 167.

\*The PCF was one of the 'leaders' in turning the international communist movement into revisionists and betrayers of the working class. The PCF betrayed the general strike of 1936 and saved the day for the "Popular Front." During World War II, the PCF allied with a motley crew of bosses (led by DeGaulle) in a nationalist struggle against fascism. The slogan, "Fight for socialism," was never raised. After the war, the PCF ordered its members to surrender their weapons so that the PCF could enter the government. Once in power, the PCF proved its loyalty to the bosses by smashing strikes like those of the coal workers and the public employees. It was a 'communist' Minister of Defense who sent French troops to crush the Vietnamese in 1947!

man's war" was not in the class interests of most of them), very large numbers of French students began organizing militant opposition, first to atrocities committed by the colonialists in Algeria, then to the entire war. On October 27, 1960, the Union Nationale des Etudiants de France (UNEF, a student syndicalist organization that was to play an important role in 1968) organized a huge anti-war protest meeting. Within one year its membership had soared to 100,000—roughly one of every three French students.

A Marxist-Leninist party could have won many thousands within this mass movement to the concepts of revolution and proletarian dictatorship, but, as indicated above, the PCF had long since followed Khrushchev and Co. on the road to revisionism, and its conscious policy without exception was to prevent or divert the class struggle.

After the end of the Algerian war, the French student movement and, particularly, the UNEF became a battleground between various Trotskyite sects, the PCF's student organization (the Union des Etudiants Communistes—UEC), and pro-Chinese anti-revisionists who wanted to break away from the PCF and build a worker-student alliance. The Maoists, however, never succeeded in overcoming the contradiction between their stated aims and their slavish aping of the more and more right-wing Maoist line.

As larger numbers of students came into motion against the Vietnam war, the PCF (which followed Moscow's line of collusion with the U.S. imperialists) did everything it could to break the groundswell. Demonstrations of 20,000 that fought cops in front of the U.S. embassy were not uncommon by 1966—yet the PCF contented itself with fund-raises and pacifist nonsense.

Many students and "lycéens" (high school students) became disgusted with the PCF's laissez-faire attitude toward U.S. imperialism. The National Vietnam Committee (CVN) and High School Vietnam Committees (CVL) were formed by the end of 1966 to do what the PCF refused to do. These committees later led to High School Action Committees (CAL), which planned militant activities around the high school population's many grievances. These CAL caused the school administrators a great deal of grief, enough so that after one student was expelled from the famous Lycée Condorcet for organizing a picket line, the CAL put together a demonstration of several hundred students demanding free speech in the Lycées.

In addition to their willingness to fight imperialism, French university students had a vast backlog of grievances. They had opposed the French ruling class' move toward nuclear independence, demanding that the money be used instead to improve material conditions in the universities. The demand was naive; the conditions that prompted it were genuine; overcrowding, complete lack of library space except in the élite "Grandes Ecoles;" total authoritarianism on the part of the professors; a difficult, highly competitive curriculum that excluded a high per-



Students Hurl Bricks at Cops.

centage of degree candidates from the job market, etc.

In addition, despite the blatant treacheries of the PCF, there was a great deal of spontaneous pro-working class consciousness on French campuses. To be sure, the anti-Marxist and anti-proletarian theories of Marcuse had been widely circulated in France and even preceded by a French Marcuse-ite named Gorz, but although a number of people were taken in by these glorifications of petty-bourgeois hippydom, tens of thousands of French students and intellectuals knew perfectly well that the working class existed, that it was exploited, and that they could and should unite with it.

Numerous documents, particularly from the sociology departments of different faculties, indicate that many students and young professors were fed up with being trained as the pollsters, psychologists, and court jesters of capitalism, and that they wanted to transform the "bourgeois university" into a "university in the service of the working class."

This is not the place to dwell on the essentially reactionary "counter-institutional" content of this demand. In our own party's work on campus during the anti-war movement, we had many occasions to struggle against this line of "shutting it down and opening it up again as a 'revolutionary' institution." Only a Marxist-Leninist party with a correct revolutionary approach to the question of state power can win people away from this illusion. As we will see below, the PCF wanted at all costs to prevent the worker-student alliance from materializing. The fact remains that, despite many errors and weaknesses, a large section of students in the UNEF and a large section of professors in the SNESup (the organization of college teachers) were vocally pro-working class and open to M-L leadership.

Agitation around these and other issues had characterized campus life throughout the fall of 1967-8. On March 22, a meeting at Nanterre (a

suburban campus near Paris) protested the arrest of some students after anti-war demonstrators had broken the windows of the Paris American Express office. On March 28, the Nanterre dean suspended all lectures, and on March 30, the Gaullist Minister of Education Peyrefitte gave a radio interview in which he referred to the demonstrators as "mad dogs."

The situation at Nanterre began to escalate. When a PCF Central Committee hack came to speak there on April 26, he barely escaped manhandling by the Maoists. On May 2, a history professor was scheduled to give a lecture when a number of militant students demanded he make his lecture hall available for a showing of a film about Che Guevara. When he refused, the lecture hall was seized.

On May 3, the Nanterre faculty was closed indefinitely by the administration. The burgeoning student revolt had become national news.

In the afternoon of the same day, 400 students (many from Nanterre) held a protest meeting against the Nanterre closing inside the Sorbonne (the main campus of the University of Paris). Some were armed in anticipation of an attack from **Occident** (the fascist student organization) that never materialized that day. It should be noted, however, that the entire pre-May period was characterized by frequent skirmishes with the fascists, bombings set off by them, etc. The police almost never arrested the **Occident** thugs—a situation we know well from the U.S. police's "most favorable treatment" of ROAR, the KKK, etc. The rector of the University tried to get the protestors to leave. When they refused, he called the cops, who hauled all 400 away in paddy-wagons.

This was the first time police had entered the Sorbonne. It was also the spark that led to the first "Barricades of May."

Once the fighting began, it lasted for nearly six hours until 10:30 PM. At the height of this initial battle in the Latin Quarter, 1500 policemen were up against barely more than 2000 students, and they had their hands full. French student demonstrations have a long history of confrontations with the police. However, until 1968, the fighting usually limited itself to a few small skirmishes, a handful of arrests, and then a quick retreat by the students across "no man's land."

From the opening round, "May" was different. Aside from the fact that no gunshots were fired on either side, the first battle set the tone for a near all-out war. The police had their lead-weighted capes, their billy-clubs, and their gas-guns (they claimed to use only tear-gas, but expert testimony later proved they used the same deadly CN gas employed by the U.S. imperialists in Vietnam and by U.S. police forces against the ghetto rebels). The students had plenty of courage and ingenuity. They tore up the streets and used the cobblestones both to build barricades and as missiles. They ripped iron railings out of the ground and turned them into makeshift spears. They manufactured crude Molotov cocktails. By the end of the first evening, two hundred arrests

had been made and although the students had suffered many casualties, for the first time in nearly 20 years of struggle against the ruling class, **they had inflicted nearly as many.**

The following week was a crescendo of violence against the state apparatus. On Monday the 6th, the Sorbonne, which had been closed since Friday, was under heavy police guard. At noon, a long student demonstration led the cops on a whirlwind tour of Paris. In order to confuse the police, the marchers often quickened their pace to double-time and assumed traffic-directing duties themselves. Fighting again broke out when the demonstrators returned to the Latin Quarter and found access to the Sorbonne blocked. The battle began at 3:30 PM and lasted until nearly the same time the next morning. Eyewitness accounts indicate the fighting was a good deal heavier than the previous Friday.

The next day 30,000 demonstrators outmaneuvered the police, crossed over to the right bank and marched up the Champs Elysées to the Arch of Triumph, where they sang the **Internationale**. After the march returned to the Latin Quarter 2-3,000 students remained to engage in sporadic fighting.

On May 8, the Ministry of National Education tried to negotiate with leaders from the UNEF and SNESup., but they held firm on their three demands: re-open the Sorbonne, free all imprisoned students, and withdraw the cops from the Latin Quarter. This was obviously not a radical program, but the government refused to budge. Twenty thousand demonstrators marched through the Latin Quarter that day, without major confrontations.

The final demonstration of this initial phase of May was by all accounts the most violent student action in modern French history. At 7:30 PM 10,000 demonstrators left the Place Denfert-Rochereau. After a short detour, 20,000 were up the Boulevard Saint Michel to the Luxembourg gardens, the only route left open to them by the police. When they arrived, the leadership of the march told them to disperse and to occupy the area surrounding the Sorbonne.

At 9:15 the first barricade went up. Another thirty were to be erected before the night was over. At 2:15 AM, the Prefect of Police gave the CRS the order to disperse the demonstrators. A pitched battle lasted for nearly three hours, and before the police mop-up had finished, it was well past dawn.

Virtually every available eyewitness account other than those of fascist groups, the police themselves, and the government praises the students for their courage, their skill, and their determination. By the same token, the police, who had previously committed many acts of great brutality, responded on this "night of the barricades" with hitherto unparalleled viciousness. They refused first-aid vehicles entrance to the battle area, beat up medical personnel, invaded neighboring houses and committed atrocities against the occupants. The residents were clearly on the students' side. At great risk to their

personal safety, many opened their doors to wounded students, threw missiles down on the cops from their windows, and even encouraged the students to take their cars to solidify the barricades. Dozens of wrecked automobiles were cleared off the streets on the morning of the 11.

During the same week, agitation began to grip the provincial campuses. There were several thousand students in the streets in nearly every university town, although major violence against the state broke out only in Toulouse.

Two important observations can be made from this initial period of the French uprising. First, the students showed themselves to be an important force for galvanizing mass struggle against the bourgeoisie. Their actions—and, particularly, the tenacity and militancy with which they pursued them—taught millions of French workers a positive lesson about how the road to victory lies outside the ruling class' regulations. Many workers who were initially led by the bosses' press to believe that the students were "crazy" later expressed great admiration for the discipline and seriousness with which they went about fighting the cops. The lesson about the limited value of "symbolic" protest activity that didn't get down to real fighting was soon to find its application in the factories.

However, at the same time, for all the admirable qualities shown by the mass of students during this week, there was a crucial weakness. **No serious political leadership existed.** Various forces in the UNEF and the SNESup., who may well have had their hearts in the right place, couldn't provide adequate direction because of their essentially reformist outlook. Even when they couched their aspirations in pseudo-Marxist rhetoric, their basic program boiled down to the



institutional restructuring of the university outlined above. Daniel Cohn-Bendit, about whom the French bosses' press made a great to-do, was little more than a wittier version of Mark Rudd. His politics were anarchist and openly anti-communist. After the "night of the barricades," his influence on the movement was negligible.

The Maoists were limited by their adulation of the Chairman and by the fact that they had little base among the students and no outlook to build one. Their relations with the working class were tenuous at best.

The main Trotskyite group (JCR) typically tailed the reformism of the movement's political demands and covered this with the actions of its marshalls, who did a lot of front-line fighting with the cops.

No existing "left" group in France could have played a role in moving the students in a significantly leftward direction (i.e. toward the working class and the d of the p) especially the PCF\*. To say with hindsight that this is what the PCF should have done would be an idealist error tantamount to asking Brezhnev to return to Leninism and then being disappointed when he refused.

The fact is that, despite the objective situation and despite the openness of masses to revolutionary ideas, there was no organization in France capable of seizing revolutionary leadership or of leading the fight for power.

A graphic example of how far the students were from the concept of power in the early days of their fighting is their 15-mile march through Paris on the rainy Tuesday of May 7, when they filed by the National Assembly without even glancing at it—although it was in session at the time, and although it would have been a far more advanced political act to set up barricades there than in the student section of town.

However, it would be an error of monumental arrogance and stupidity to blame the heroic mass of students for the craven treachery of the PCF or for the fact that capable, steeled new Marxist-Leninist parties do not arise overnight on the swamp of revisionism.

Just as the absence of a revolutionary party was a decisive limiting factor in the May revolt, so was the active sabotage carried out by the PCF. In the initial phase of the student revolt, the PCF line dovetailed remarkably with that of the government. The party clearly wanted to quash anything that resembled militant activity. From the onset of the Nanterre demonstrations, *L'Humanité* (the PCF daily) carried articles attacking the "ultra-leftism" of a handful of

\* Many students and workers had the illusion that the PCF was a progressive party, only 'misled' in some of its policies. The PCF was a capitalist party, dedicated to maintaining capitalism and the exploitation of the workers. The PCF wanted different policies than those of DeGaulle (it wanted state capitalism and alliance with the Soviet imperialists), but the differences were secondary to the main aim they both shared: keeping the workers out of power. A PCF government in 1968 would have been no victory for the French working class.

"groupuscules" and "provocateurs." By the time the struggle had spread to the Sorbonne and bitter street fighting against the cops was a daily routine, the PCF started accusing the "provocateurs" of playing into the hands of the government and the police. Incidentally, very incidentally, it castigated the police for their "excesses."

This back-stabbing had a dual effect on the mass of rebellious students. In the first place, the PCF was more exposed than ever as a reactionary force. On the other hand, since there was no revolutionary alternative, the PCF's actions tended to build anti-communism among students. Many, who because of their class position, were naturally susceptible to anarchist ideas, fell prey to the "anti-stalinist" baits of Cohn-Bendit and other "leaders." True to form, the party did nothing to answer these baits in a principled way. On the contrary: Georges Séguy (the head of the CGT and a PCF Central Committee member) could find no better argument against Cohn-Bendit than an anti-German racist slur (Cohn-Bendit was a German citizen).

By the end of the week of May 12, however, the situation had gone way beyond the control of both the government and the PCF, although neither understood just how far at the time. Public revulsion against the police was at an all-time high because of the CRS tactics in the Latin Quarter, particularly on the "night of the barricades." The working class sections of Paris, which had been indifferent if not hostile to the students' grievances in April, were now openly sympathetic. The anti-police sentiment was more than symbolic: a good number of cops complained that they were afraid to walk alone in the streets at night. Attacks on solitary policemen were noted in various quarters of the city. One policeman was quoted as saying that he didn't dare take public transportation to and from work in his uniform.

The Paris student revolt had gone about as far as it could go by itself. It had dramatically revealed the profound dissatisfaction with the status quo of masses of students and intellectuals; it had raised—however unclearly—the issue of capitalist education vs. education for the people; it had exposed the vicious oppressive character of the government; it had set a shining example of militancy. However, if the revolt were to reach a qualitatively higher stage, two conditions were necessary. Secondly, the student struggle had to spread beyond Paris (which it did). Primarily, the working class would have to join in and take the lead.

Which it did. Nothing gauges the weakness of the existing bourgeois institutions in France in 1968 (both the capitalist government and the PCF) more clearly than the degree to which they were unprepared for the working class tidal wave that was about to engulf them. They understood that the student uprising could be dismissed as a middle-level annoyance as long as the industrial workers kept quiet. They had no inkling of how absurd it was to expect this to be the case.

On May 8th, the CGT and CFDT had called a day of massive protest in Brittany and the Loire Valley region. The focus of this "one-day strike" was the threat to job security. Factories had been closing down and mass layoffs had been a fact of life in this part of France for several years. The government, which was beginning to get jittery, sent 10,000 "gendarmes" (national police) and CRS to back up the local cops.

Popular support for the strike was overwhelming. In Brest, 120,000 demonstrated; in Lorient, 15,000; in Quimper, 10,000. The day was mostly peaceful, but the size of the demonstrations was handwriting aplenty on the wall.

The PCF must have figured that something had to be done other than sideline sniping to keep things in tow. On May 9th, the CGT initiated an alliance with the CFDT. Together the two unions sought to contact the UNEF and to organize a joint protest against the police repression in Paris. The theory was that a large, orderly demonstration of workers would have a calming effect on the volatile Latin Quarter situation.

On May 10-11, the "night of the barricades" took place. Revulsion against the government was at its highest point.

On May 12th, after eight hours of almost farcical negotiations, the CGT, the CFDT, and the UNEF finally agreed on a plan for the next day's protest march.

The same evening, Prime Minister Pompidou returned from a trip to Iran and Afghanistan. (De Gaulle at the time was being squired around Rumania by the revisionists and treated as a conquering hero.) He went immediately to the government-run TV station, where he recorded a speech making the first governmental concessions to the student demonstrations since the onset of the fighting. He promised to re-open the Sorbonne the next day and to see that the Court of Appeals would hear the cases of the students still in jail.

Given the "hard line" pursued by the police and other government ministers in Pompidou's absence, the "official" left viewed this gesture as a major retreat.

Both the ruling class and the PCF were counting on these minor concessions and on the events of the 13th to end the whole nasty business. One imbecile close to the government made the following incredible statement: "A well-disciplined demonstration on the 13th will give the opposition a chance to end this fortnight of violent agitation with a flourish. We'll let the demonstrators have the streets for one day. After that, things will go back to normal."

### THE WORKERS

In 1968, there were roughly 14,000,000 industrial workers in France out of a population of 50,000,000. Only 20% were paid union members. About 1,500,000 belonged to the CGT; 7-800,000 belonged to the CFDT; and 300,000 belonged to FO ("Force Ouvrière, an organization financed in part by the CIA through the ILGWU).

The French labor force was augmented by the presence of 2,000,000 immigrant workers, mostly from Algeria and Portugal.

The French working class had plenty to fight about. Its work week of 48 hours was the longest in the advanced European capitalist countries. Salaries were abysmally low: the income gap between the bourgeoisie and the working class is greater today in France than in any other major capitalist country. Job security was increasingly threatened. And to top it off, the government had just rescinded the social security act, thereby robbing workers of the considerable benefits they had won in the hard-fought battles of the 1930s.

The demonstration in Paris on the 13th was enormous. The government mouthpiece TV station estimated it at 171,000; the cops said 200,000; and a more objective journalistic source put the figure at 600,000. Regardless of the exact number, it proved that the masses were with the students against the ruling class, and that the workers themselves, at the very least, had plenty of grievances. Similar actions took place in the provinces: 50,000 in Marseille, 40,000 in Toulouse (the largest parade since the Liberation from the Nazis), 35,000 in Lyon, 20,000 in Nantes, 12,000 in Rennes, nearly 10,000 each in Caen, Limoges, and Aix-en-Provence.

The student movement gave no indication that day of returning to normalcy. As soon as the Sorbonne re-opened as Pompidou had promised, it was invaded and occupied. Fighting took place outside Paris between student demonstrators and police on the 13th. In Nantes, Le Mans and Clermont-Ferrand, students tried to seize police headquarters. Every major provincial university was occupied by students. In fact, the student revolt was broadening out—just the opposite of what both the government and the PCF had anticipated.

More significantly, however, the French working class was in no mood to be contented with a one-day symbolic protest.

The first assault was launched by the workers of Sud-Aviation in Nantes. They had been agitating for several weeks against a company plan to reduce the work week and to cut wages as well. (The return to the 40-hour week was an ongoing national union demand.)

The resumption of work on May 14 was a number of young workers leading their comrades off the job. Quickly, the wildcatters seized the administration's offices and imprisoned the director. That night, 2,000 workers ate in the factory and then prepared to spend the night there.

No one in either the PCF or the government worried too much about the events at Sud-Aviation. At this point, the bourgeoisie and the revisionists were still preoccupied with figuring out how to squash the students. They hadn't the slightest idea that the events of the next three weeks would make the student uprising seem like the proverbial tea-party.

---

\* Rioux and Backmann, p. 245.





The second assault came from the Renault factory in Cléon. Five thousand workers manufactured gear-boxes and engines for the government-run automaker's R8, R10, and R16 models in this shop. Since the factory opened in 1958, a vast backlog of grievances had been piling up. The workers resented the arrogance of the supervisory personnel (imported in the main from Paris), the complicated system of exploitation that created situations in which two men could be doing exactly the same work on exactly the same machines for a 30% pay differential, and the fact that despite the high level of technical training received by most of the production personnel, promotions were virtually unobtainable.

Whatever the specifics, capitalism had the workers of Renault-Cléon hopping mad on the morning of May 15.

They had followed the student revolt with interest and sympathy. Only 30 or 40% of the factory had gone out on the demonstrations of the 13th. "We felt a bit ashamed," said one worker from Cléon. Everyone else was on the move; we'd hardly budged. We wanted to use the first available chance to make up for it."

That they did. Wednesday the 15th had been set by the unions in the west as a protest day against the rescinding of the social security act. Typically, the CGT and CFDT had called for a one-hour work-stoppage. On their own, the workers decided to add another half-hour. The stoppage was 100% successful at Cléon.

At noon, the workers learned about the sit-down at Sud-Aviation. The shop was abuzz with the news. Two hundred young workers (the average age at Cléon was under 30) formed a militant parade that marched up to the windows of the bosses' offices. The union officials, who were almost as panic-stricken as the administrators, were pushed by the rank and file to the front of the march and told to demand entry to the administration offices. The bosses refused. The head supervisors went berserk. They blockaded the

doors with crowbars. The workers refused to leave.

The union officials had a great deal of trouble getting themselves recognized as the leaders of the strike. Finally, four general demands were adopted:

1. Full freedom for the unions to organize. (French law and company practice placed fascist-like restrictions on the type of union activity that could take place on the job.)
2. Progressive return to the 40-hour week with no loss in pay.
3. Minimum wage of 1,000 Francs a month (about \$200 at the time).
4. Permanent contracts for 800 "temporary" workers.

At one AM the strikers bedded down for the night. The security had already been organized. At 5 AM, the morning shift arrived to find the locked factory gates patrolled by pickets.

Thus began the greatest strike in the history of France and one of the greatest in the history of the world.

### THE TIDAL WAVE

From then on, strike fever gripped the four corners of France. At 8 AM on Thursday the 16th, 1,800 workers at the Beauvais Lockheed factory decided to maintain Wednesday's "one-day" walk-out. At the Orléans U.N.E.L.E.C. factory, 1,200 workers downed their tools. At 2 PM, Renault workers in Flins seized the factories there. At 4:15, the Renault plant at LeMans was occupied. At 5 PM, after a one-hour work stoppage, the main Renault plant at Billancourt fell. Within a matter of hours, the strike at Renault was solid throughout the country, as Sandouville and Orléans completed the picture.

By Thursday evening, 70,000 workers were on strike. Sixty thousand of them came from different divisions of Renault.

From the beginning, there was a move at the occupied Sorbonne to forge a worker-student alliance. The Maoists in the U.J.C. (M.-L.) were the main organizing force behind this. The UNEF and SNESup. later joined in. On Thursday night, a march of more than 1,000 students left the Sorbonne for Billancourt to support the strikers who had seized the plant only hours earlier.

After a two and a half hour march, they arrived at Billancourt. A student spokesman said: "We want to establish ties between workers and students who are in struggle, and we have come to support you."

A union delegate (almost certainly a "ce-gétiste") answered with the characteristic slimminess of the PCF: "We thank you for your solidarity. But we ask you not to come into the factory. If you do, you'll give the administration the excuse it needs to call in the police." The students waited a moment, then marched around the factory singing the *Internationale*. Afterwards, small groups of workers and students held impromptu discussions in the street until one A.M., when the Sorbonnards went back to Paris.

This first attempt to build unity between the



battles of the factory and those of the campus was to follow a similar pattern for the rest of the strike: groups of students—often sizable—would look to establish contact with workers, while the CGT functionaries would attempt to thwart this development at every turn.

On the morning of May 17, French President DeGaulle was still in Rumania. The day before, he had visited the industrial city of Craiova, where the revisionists had made the factory workers down their tools to greet him, in a gesture of friendship toward this capitalist butcher.

French workers had a different outlook that day. By 8 AM, 100,000 were on strike. From this point on, the numbers grew in quantum leaps. Each news bulletin brought information about fresh sit-down strikes. When Georges Séguy held a press conference at 4 PM, he estimated the number of strikers at 300,000. He hadn't counted the railroad workers (French railroads are nationalized) who had blocked the tracks at the important Lyon junction a half-hour earlier or the Paris transit workers who had just begun their walkout.

This was the situation at 8 PM: aeronautic construction was virtually paralyzed; the Renault strike continued; the movement had begun to hit the metal works in Paris and Normandie; the shipyards in the West and the South had been struck; all the Rhodiacéta factories had been seized. As the evening of the 17th drew to a close, the strikers numbered between 500,000 and 600,000.

By Saturday morning, the figure had swelled to a million. All the major railroad stations were closed; postal services were crippled; airline navigators went out and encouraged ground personnel to follow suit.

That afternoon, miners entered the picture along with a large number of miscellaneous workers.

From this point on, it became impossible to name all the individual factories that had been struck. News bulletins spoke now of entire sectors on strike, and the strikers began to be counted in the millions.

Between Saturday evening and Monday morning, the strikers leapt from 2,000,000 to 6,000,000, as non-industrial workers (department stores, insurance companies, banks, etc.) walked off the job.

On Thursday, May 24, at the high point of the movement, between nine and ten million French workers were on strike.

### TREACHERY

Never since the World War II had the foundations of a modern capitalist society been so massively shaken.

However, in order for these foundations to be toppled, in order for a revolution to take place, the two classic Leninist conditions were necessary: first, the old ruling class had to be so gravely weakened that it could no longer continue to rule in the old way; second, the masses had to

understand the need for power and act upon that understanding, led by their party.

We will touch upon the weakness of the French ruling class shortly below. Since the internal is primary in all processes, the decisive factor in this situation was the second condition. There was, of course, enormous unevenness in the consciousness of the 10,000,000 strikers. However, eyewitness accounts and interviews recorded at the moment of the strike indicate that many workers—particularly those in heavy industry—wanted far more out of the strike than the economic demands outlined by the trade union leadership.

Here is a typical example. At the beginning of the Flins (Renault) sitdown, one worker made the following remarks to a large strike meeting:

The bosses' authority is absolute and arbitrary. We're still living under a company monarchy. Freedom—including freedom to organize—and democracy have got to be brought into the company.

... The students are saying (and this is the meaning they've given to their fight): we have to get rid of the society we're living in. Do we, the workers of Flins agree? (ovation). All right then. Let's continue our action. Join the union of your choice and let's build a society of proud, free men.

This text is not quoted for its value as a Marxist-Leninist document. Obviously, it contains many weaknesses and illusions. It is noteworthy, however, because despite its confusion and unclarity, the masses were fairly crying out for a new life, for revolutionary politics, for communist leadership. In the absence of this leadership, the workers could do little but stay in the factories and follow the only organizations they recognized as their own.

For its part, the PCF, which had originally tailed every phase of the movement, was now faced with the dilemma of leading ten million people back to work and capitalism.

The revisionists' first new task became to imprison the strike within narrowly defined trade union guidelines. This was the main reason Séguy and Co. did everything possible to head off all attempts to organize worker-student unity. Even without formal communist leadership, the students were interested in revolutionary politics. Many of them had read Marx and Lenin, and however tenuous their grasp of revolutionary theory might be, the idea that the slogan of proletarian dictatorship might "contaminate" the working class was too much for the revisionists to contemplate.

So the PCF mounted a major right-wing political offensive through the CGT. Séguy set the tone at a press conference on the 17th, as the strike was swelling by leaps and bounds:

We will not go beyond our vocation as trade-unionists. It's possible that the movement has started the disintegration of gaullism, but we're not the judges of that matter. Our job is not to lead such a movement to the downfall of the system. That's the job of political organizations:

they have their own responsibilities. Is the time ripe for a general strike? We don't know. Even if conditions were such that we could call for a general strike, we wouldn't do it. It's very important to us that workers in each enterprise decide democratically on their course of action. Our job isn't to give the workers directives or orders.

This from the most important trade union official in France, the immediate leader of one and a half million workers, a member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party.

Having failed to prevent the student revolt and to restrain the working class, the PCF now had to sabotage the struggle from within. Its next move was to intensify Séguin's political attack in the name of "no politics." In every shop and factory, the CGT moved to take control of the situation by asserting that only pure economic demands could bring victory to the workers. As indicated above, this move was in direct contradiction to the aspirations of many strikers, but the CGT was able to take advantage of the fact that the revolutionary mood of the rank and file had no organizational form through which to channel its enormous energies.

The following interview with a CGT member critical of official PCF policy gives an idea of the contradictions between the "leadership" and the base:

In many shops, the lack of communication between the CGT and the base was so great that it was becoming impossible to speak in public of anything other than bread-and-butter demands. For instance, when you tried to explain that the situation was ripe to dump DeGaulle and his gang, the shop delegate would jump on you with the line: "No politics here!" and then guys would add: "Shut up, politico!"... You couldn't even begin to think of talking about the students. They'd shoot right back at you: "Everyone where they belong. The students on their campuses, the workers in their factories."

This, in general, was the overall picture at the beginning of the fourth week in May. Tens of thousands of students were holding workshops and conferences in occupied universities, debating about new "revolutionary" social forms and attempting periodically to establish some form of contact with neighboring workers. Millions of workers on strike were talking about changing the fundamental character of the boss-worker relationship and looking vainly for leadership that was not to materialize. The CGT, as the main trade union, had succeeded in taking control of the strike—at least to the point of stopping it from moving further to the left—and the PCF controlled the CGT.

Even with these advantages, however, the ultimate betrayal of this mass movement wasn't going to be a piece of cake. Not only were the workers not ready to pack it in, but contradictions were beginning to emerge within the PCF

itself. A number of dedicated party militants who had stuck with the movement through thick and thin now quit in disgust with the revisionists' line. One resignation in particular, that of André Barjonet, had considerable effect. Barjonet had joined the PCF student organization at the age of 17. He later joined the party and fought in the anti-Nazi Resistance. In 1946, he became secretary of the CGT's Center for Economic Studies. Since 1959, he had served on the party's economic council. Barjonet was a respected Marxist economist who could hardly be baited for "mad dogism."

On May 23, after 30 years in the PCF, Barjonet resigned, with the following statement. His remarks reflect not only the justifiable anger of many workers, intellectuals and militants at their betrayal by the party, but also an objective situation that, given the presence of a Marxist-Leninist organization, could conceivably have led to in-



The "Communist" Party's Line:  
Profits Bring Socialism.

urrection and serious attempt to seize power:

I am the last to underestimate... the advantages that the working class can win from the struggle over reform demands. But at the present time, when millions of workers, students and French people from all walks of life are participating in the most powerful popular movement that our country has ever known, I must state my conviction that it is possible to go much further, to advance toward socialism and, at the very least, to bring down the gaullist regime. By failing to respond to the deepest aspirations of the workers and students... the major trade unions and left-wing political organizations that claim to represent the working class bear a heavy historic responsibility, one with which I can no longer associate myself.

In a subsequent statement, Barjonet hit the nail on the head when he explained the reason for the party's actions during the struggle. The issue was

not individual treachery but rather the fact that the party had become "...integrated in the system, just like social-democracy. The party's own patriotism has killed its potential. The idea has become to protect the organization rather than risk it in action."

Barjonet's resignation and those that followed it didn't lead anywhere. In fact, Barjonet himself quickly enrolled in the PSU, Pierre Mendes-France's party. Every time Séguy launched one of his violent anti-student verbal attacks, he left a wake of torn-up PCF membership cards. But those who were lucid enough to leave the party, like the masses in the occupied factories and on the campuses, had no-where to go.

It seems reasonable to say that the situation was objectively revolutionary. But "objective" conditions include the subjective political development of the masses. In order for "May" to have developed into a full-scale insurrection, certain key conditions were necessary:

1. The masses, and particularly the workers in heavy industry, would have had to be organized around the concept of workers' state power over a period of years;

2. The party, having estimated the potential inherent in the May rebellion, would have had to supply the workers with weapons in order to launch armed struggle;

3. The party would have had to call for the seizure of power as the only logical course for the struggle to pursue;

4. The party would have had to stimulate and organize the worker-student alliance (and other parallel' alliances) around a revolutionary line.

Obviously, these conditions were not and could not be present. Revolutions aren't rabbits to be pulled out of hats. The fact remains, nonetheless, that in a total vacuum of left leadership, in a modern imperialist country less than ten years ago, millions of workers and students proved that the objective contradictions of the profit system inevitably lead to situations in which the move for state power can—and sooner or later will—become the order of the day.

### THE BOURGEOISIE ON THE BRINK

Despite the fact that in the last analysis its state power was never seriously threatened, the French bourgeoisie's fundamental weakness was glaringly exposed by the May rebellion. Nowhere was this weakness more evident than in the various police forces and the army.

The French ruling class had the following police organizations:

- the **Police**: 83,100 members, divided into 14,700 civilian cops (judicial police, information, etc.) and 68,400 uniformed personnel, including 54,900 urban police and 13,500 mobile CRS.

- the **Gendarmerie**: 45,000 men in charge of maintaining order in the department or territory to which they were assigned and another 16,000 equipped with submachine guns and tanks, whose job was to reinforce local police when needed. As noted above, the unpopularity of the police

had reached an all-time high by the beginning of the third week in May, and this was beginning to undermine the cops' morale. There was talk of a police rebellion, which never materialized. In the long run, the government was always able to count on the cops, particularly the gendarmes, to carry out its orders. Nonetheless, two conclusions are inescapable. First, for all their viciousness, 145,000 professional strike-breakers are no match for 10,000,000 strikers. Second, the PCF, which had worked both openly and secretly in the police force since the days of World War II, could have used its influence to provoke a crisis inside the police. Clearly this would have benefitted the workers, but the party had no intention of doing such a thing.

The army was, if anything, far less reliable than the police. In the first place, many ranking members of the "elite" professional corps had long-standing grievances against DeGaulle. A good number of them were died-in-the-wool fascists who had participated in the OAS (Secret Army Organization) plan to establish military rule in France and pursue the Algerian war "to the end." The dominant section of the French bourgeoisie put a stop to this by bringing DeGaulle to power in 1958 and keeping him there despite the fascists' terror tactics, but DeGaulle remained extremely unpopular with his former adversaries—all the more so, since Raoul Salan and other OAS leaders had been sentenced to long prison terms in an appeasement gesture to the anti-colonialist sentiment of the mass movement.

Given the choice between defending DeGaulle and standing by while the working class revolt intensified, the officers would doubtless have stuck with the bourgeoisie, but the fact remains that this contradiction existed and that it hardly strengthened French capitalism in this time of crisis.

In addition to the "armée de métier" of career officers and soldiers, there was also a large corps of conscripts, who came, naturally, from the fields and factories. They had followed the events of May with great interest. At first they were hostile to the students, whose violent demonstrations had caused them to be confined to the barracks. Subsequent events, however, gave these men food for thought: when they began to hear about the peasant demonstrations and the workers' strikes, they realized that their friends and relatives were involved in this movement. Many of the junior officers had younger brothers and sisters among the militant students. Below is a sample of comments made on-the-spot by some of the conscripts:

The guys from the countryside took the longest time to make up their minds, but in the end, they agreed with us. If we were asked to march against the strikers, we wouldn't go (PL, student, soldier at Versailles).

I went to put out fires in the Latin Quarter and had cobblestones thrown at me, but in the long run, I understood the students.

In civilian life, I'm studying to be a phys. ed. teacher. (An army fireman from Paris.) We talked every day about what was happening and no one had a kind word for the cops. (A corporal in charge of a transport unit.)

A revolutionary party with a base inside the French army could have led a mutiny in May of 1968 and carried out the line: Turn the guns around. Even without such a party, certain units were already organizing to rebel in the event they were ordered to fight the strikers. The following letter to *Le Nouvel Observateur* (a social democratic weekly) from a leftist junior officer is typical of the army's instability as a defender of bourgeois state power:

If it will reassure you, I want to make it clear that there is not a single enlisted man (here) who wants to (fight the strikers). Just the opposite: committees have been organized to turn against the officers and also to sabotage all transport vehicles, armored or otherwise. For this reason, the Minister of the Armed Forces has rapidly moved to take security precautions against these measures (personnel transfers)<sup>3</sup>

When soldiers were called up to help the Paris sanitation department clean the streets after the battles of the Latin Quarter, they frequently fraternized with the students. Army trucks carrying draftees were even observed driving through the capital flying red flags.



Mass Rally of Workers and Students,  
May 27, 1968.

3. All quotes from this page and the one preceding are from Rioux and Backman.

Numerically, the French armed forces were relatively small:

- 168,000 in the Army (of whom 120,000 were conscripts);
- 34,000 in the Navy (of whom 8,500 were conscripts);
- 59,000 in the Air Force (of whom 23,000 were conscripts).

The most stable right wing forces, as noted, were the career officers and the Gendarmerie. All the others were a liability or, at best, a question mark.

Both qualitatively and quantitatively, the French ruling class' repressive apparatus would have been in no shape to withstand a serious insurrectionary battle by millions of revolutionary-minded strikers. It appears that Lenin's first condition—the old ruling class must be unable to continue ruling in the old way—had developed sufficiently so that the immediate call for an uprising insurrection would have been absolutely correct.

It is useless to indulge in hypothetical ramblings that have no link to reality. However, we can learn an important lesson from speculating briefly about the possible international ramifications if the French strike had become a fullscale insurrection.\*

The Vietnam war was still going on; therefore the U.S. ruling class—which would have had little maneuverability in this situation—would have had to choose between sending troops to France or to Vietnam. This contradiction would have further weakened U.S. imperialism and would have given an incalculable boost to the anti-war movement, the strike wave, and the ghetto rebellions here. The French bourgeoisie probably would have had to rely on NATO troops to prop up its own tottering army. There was speculation at the time that DeGaulle had gotten the Germans to agree to intervene if necessary. The irony of such a development, after the Kaiser's troops had massa-

\* The bourgeoisie maintains its hold over the working class both through open repression and through deceiving workers—persuading them that "this is the best of all possible worlds," "you can't fight city hall," etc. Spread through TV, schools, and hundreds of other channels, bourgeois ideology has a strong effect on the working class. When millions of workers see through the bosses' lies, the bosses' old way of bolstering their rule falls apart. In France in May 1968, the ideological hold on the bourgeoisie was dissolving.

In times of revolutionary crisis, the bourgeoisie is often unsure how to act. Different fractions of the bourgeoisie fight over how to proceed, weakening the ability of the bourgeoisie as a whole to hold down the workers. For instance, in Russia in 1917, there were many different fractions—some supporting the Provisional Government, some wanting a return to Czarism, some wanting peace with Germany, some wanting independence from the Russian 'prisonhouse of nations.' These splits made it impossible for the ruling class to continue to rule in the old way; they made it easier for the Bolsheviks to seize power. One factor contributing to the defeat of the French working class in 1968 was DeGaulle's ability to rally the ruling class to a unified response to the revolt of the workers and students.

cred the Communards, after World War I and the Nazi occupation, should be apparent. This move would in turn have sharpened class contradictions in the countries whose soldiers were involved in such an operation. Finally, the right was winning out in the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The Chinese leadership had taken a rotten line on the French situation: antagonistic criticism of the Soviet-allied PCF (which was obviously correct as far as it went) and a hands-off attitude toward the French ruling class (Mao and Co. wanted to maintain their new alliance with DeGaulle). However, an insurrection in France could only have weakened the Chinese right wingers, further exposed Mao, and helped the left, which was by now on the defensive.

Of course, none of the above happened. As internationalists, however, we must constantly think of the worldwide implications of particular class struggles. Given what was at stake, Waldeck Rochet (the head of the PCF at the time), Georges Marchais (its current head), and Séguy, take a historical back seat to no one as traitors to the international working class.

### **BOSSES FLOP AT BARGAINING TABLE**

On May 24, DeGaulle, who had cut short his Rumanian junket, made a TV speech in which he called for major reforms in the university and in industry. He asked for a vote of confidence in a public election the following month. Given the situation, this was a feeble play, but it reflected only the weakness of the French ruling class.

The entire "loyal opposition" (PCF, Mitterand, Mendes-France) was unanimous in rejecting this maneuver. They wanted the electoral road to power—and were plotting daily schemes to take it, both with and against each other, like any bourgeois politician—but they wanted the elections to take place on terms more favorable to their particular interests.

The same day as the General's fiasco, large and violent peasant demonstrations took place in the West. In Nantes, demonstrators seized the famous "Place Royale" and renamed it "People's Square." They occupied the city of Rennes. Everywhere, they fraternized with students and striking workers. The movement was still on the upswing.

The government had only one trump left: negotiation. On May 25, Prime Minister Pompidou and the various trade union leaders, who were all too willing, began a marathon bargaining session at the rue de Grenelle in Paris. At the end of 25 hours of negotiations, Pompidou announced that they had reached an agreement.

To be sure, the bosses had made important concessions about the minimum wage, a 10% salary hike, the right to organize, the publication of contracts, etc. However, the key reform demands for which the workers were fighting remained untouched: the 40-hour work week, earlier retirement, the social security statutes, the payment in full of strike days (the bosses agreed to only 50%), etc.

Faithful to its vocation, the CGT capitulated

first on the all-important question of the work-week. One CGT delegate waxed poetic about his organization's sellout: "The 40 hour week is a sun on the far-off horizon."

The question now became whether or not the CGT could cram this rotten deal down the workers' throats. Séguy and Co. chose to make their stand at Renault-Billancourt, a factory in which they regularly won 80% of the delegate elections.

Benoit Frachon, an old warhorse of the PCF, who had earned his spurs during the Popular Front days of the 1930s, was picked to bamboozle the Renault strikers into returning to work. He prettified the minimal gains negotiated at Grenelle; he urged the workers to keep fighting after the strike was over; he made the by-now obligatory attack on the rebellious students. The 15,000 strikers in attendance at the meeting he addressed barely accorded him a polite smattering of applause.

Frachon was followed by André Jeanson, the head of the rival CFDT. Jeanson had figured out that the sellout wasn't working. He said: "You've decided to keep the strike going. I hope the same decision was unanimous this morning in all the factories and shops of France." He received a standing ovation.

Séguy followed. He saw the jig was up and concluded with characteristic opportunism: "The CGT never gave the order to strike. As I told the 'patronat,' (the bosses' bargaining organization) we can't take the place of the workers in deciding the resumption of work."

Within a few hours, news arrived that Citroën, Berliet (a major truck manufacturer), Sud-Aviation, and Rhodiaceća were continuing the strike.

At most, a few thousand strikers returned to work and stayed there. Some shops went back on the morning of the 27th only to walk out again that afternoon.

The electricians, who until now had kept the current flowing, began to cut it selectively.

On May 27th, France was paralyzed.

The Grenelle negotiations had failed.

The government appeared to be in a shambles.

Whoever wanted power and was prepared to fight for it could have seized it on the morning of May 27th, 1968.

### **THE TIDE TURNS**

Nature and politics abhor a vacuum. The French bourgeoisie was ripe to be taken, but the working class had been stabbed in the back from within and was unable to advance toward socialism at the very moment when the capitalists' strength had all but disintegrated.

Inevitably, under the circumstances, the ruling class mounted a counter-offensive.

The PCF had given ample evidence that, no matter how far the rank and file wanted to go, it would do everything in its power to keep them shackled in the electoral prison. On May 29th, the party organized a demonstration of 3-400,000 people. The underlying purpose of this action was

to orient the masses in the direction of the ballot box. In preparation for the march, *Humanité* had run the following banner headline: "Workers' Demand: POPULAR GOVERNMENT OF DEMOCRATIC UNITY WITH COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION."

This demonstration had been called on the 28th. In less than 24 hours, the PCF was capable of mobilizing hundreds of thousands of workers in one city—yet it refused steadfastly to demand more than a few crumbs.

The police were nowhere in evidence at this march. They did not need to be. The PCF had promised the ruling class that it would "play fair," and in so doing, it gave the Gaullists the one opening they desperately needed.

The main section of the French bourgeoisie was by now openly worrying that an insurrection could result from the virtual collapse of the state apparatus between May 27 and 30. Pierre Vianson-Ponté of *Le Monde*, a French equivalent of C.L. Sulzberger, warned:

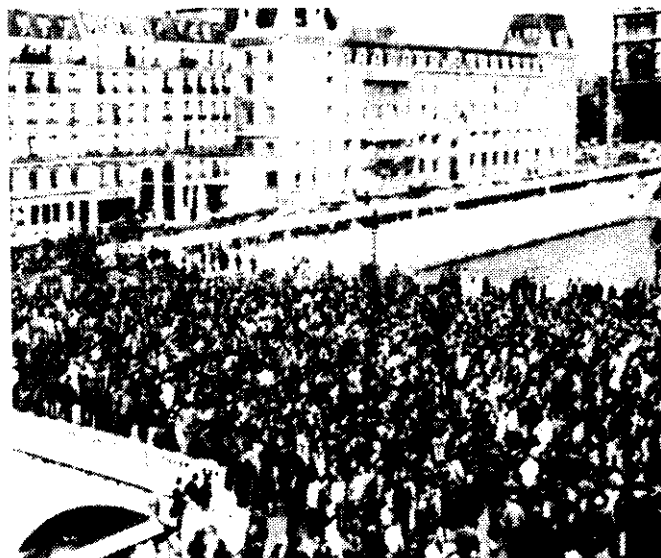
If the conclusion of negotiations between the government, the *patronat*, and the trade unions does not succeed in resolving the social conflict and if it is not accepted by the "base," then, in the present climate of violence and trouble, France risks going from a grave national crisis to a revolutionary situation... In every political and trade union grouping on the left today, there exist elements that are numerically in the minority... but are passionate, committed, and now organized as fractions. Their stated goal is the seizure of power.

Vianson-Ponté was referring doubtless to the "Revolutionary Action Committees" that were springing up everywhere. The Maoists and Trotskyites who participated in them did not have hegemony over them, and the ruling class had serious reason to fear that these committees could turn into French Soviets.

The PCF bailed out DeGaulle and Co. in two ways. First, it gave repeated assurances of its counter-revolutionary aims. Second, by calling for shared power instead of proletarian dictatorship, it gave the government an opportunity to organize a red-baiting campaign.

DeGaulle did not lose a moment. He flew to Germany, made his peace with the French generals there who had opposed him during the Algerian war, and obtained their guarantee that they would lead the army against the working class if necessary. Of course, no one knew if the troops would follow, but the ruling class had no choice other than to take the gamble. Under a cloak of secrecy, Greater Paris was surrounded by combat-ready divisions.

DeGaulle returned to Paris on the 30th. At 4:30 PM he spoke on national television. He dissolved the national assembly, called for new elections, and attempted to rally his old supporters to an orgy of anti-communism:



May 13, 1968: Workers and Students March in Paris.

France is indeed threatened with dictatorship. An attempt is being made to force her to submit to a power that would establish itself in the midst of the nation's despair, essentially a conqueror's power: that of totalitarian communism.

The PCF had given DeGaulle a chance to pull off a Houdini routine. Its own opportunism gave the ruling class the ideological weapon it needed to use against the workers.

DeGaulle called menacingly for the organization of "civic action." By this, he meant fascist vigilantes. Some came from *Occident*. Many others came from the right wing of the Resistance, the supporters of French colonialism, and the ranks of demobilized officers. These fascists were used to terrorize the masses, particularly during the June electoral campaign, when they committed more murders than the police had during the entire month of May. In France, as everywhere else, liberalism is the handmaiden of fascism.

DeGaulle's speech restored the morale of the bourgeoisie. The ruling class and all those who had the greatest interest in maintaining the status quo poured out of their elegant Right Bank homes and demonstrated for DeGaulle and "order" by the hundreds of thousands on the Champs Elysées. This march also included many petty bourgeois elements who had been frightened out of their wits by the working class.

It would take several weeks, including the heaviest fighting of all, but the tide had turned. The working class was now on the defensive.

On June 6, 6,000 CRS police were sent to rout the Renault strikers at Flins and enforce a back to work movement that the capitalists had been unable to stimulate politically. A number of students came to help the workers resist this attack. For their pains, Séguy and the PCF rewarded them with a far more violent criticism than it

reserved for the police:

...groups foreign to the working class and led by Geismar (the former head of the SNESup., the college teachers' union), who seems more and more like a specialist in provocation, ... (incite) the workers to seize back the factory. (l'Humanité)

Despite this Séguy harangue, the CRS onslaught was a failure. Most of those who returned to work under their "protection" downed tools and set up picket lines inside the factory. The CRS had to contend not only with the Renault workers and the students but also with a local population that had been roused to fury by their terrorism.

On June 11, the CRS left the factory. It was immediately reoccupied. Contrary to the disgusting lies of the PCF and its rag l'Humanité, the students were an invaluable help to the strikers during the course of this battle and others. The workers had had plenty of experience in conducting strikes and work stoppages but had never contended with the "riot" tactics of modern police forces. The students had gained much useful experience in this regard during the first two weeks of the revolt, and they taught the workers how to deal with tear gas and the other more noxious gases used by the CRS, how to retreat guerrilla-style, then regroup almost immediately. J.-Ph. Talbo's book *La Grève à Flins* contains numerous interviews with workers who express their gratitude to and solidarity with the students.

On June 10, the CRS had murdered Gilles Tautin, a Maoist high school student who had come to support the Flins strikers. The reaction in Paris was swift and violent. More barricades, more fights with the police. This time, however, the government was able to master the situation: the more open right-wing elements in Paris had been emboldened by DeGaulle's speech and by the pro-government demonstration of the 30th. Henceforth, the bourgeoisie could act with the confidence that its base would actively support it.

DeGaulle used the most recent student violence as excuse to enact a number of fascist-like measures. By order of the Council of Ministers, all demonstrations were prohibited in France for the duration of the electoral campaign (this did not include the armed raids organized by the "civic action committees..."), and a number of the more left-sounding groups, including the Maoists, were forcibly dissolved by virtue of a 1936 statute on "private militias" (these did not include the nazi *Occident*...).

Finally, to consummate his remarriage with the colonialist wing of the bourgeoisie, DeGaulle announced the imminent release from prison of General Salan and Colonel Lacheroy, the two main leaders of the OAS.

The government's wave of violence against the working class was not limited to Flins. On June 11, the CRS savagely attacked the Peugeot auto factory at Sochaux. A company-sponsored back-to-work vote had taken place on the 8th. Only 5,280 workers out of 26,000 voted. The company hadn't provided transportation for the majority of the

blue collar personnel, whom it knew to be favorable to the pursuit of the strike. Those who did vote were mainly the professional staff. They opted to end the strike.

The workers returned to the factory, but at 10 AM on the 10th, the strike began all over again.

When the CRS invaded on the morning of the 11th, the ensuing battle was ferocious. Barricades, offensive grenades, two workers murdered by the cops. Other workers and high school students from Sochaux and as far away as the town of Montbéliard fought on the side of the Flins strikers.

The battle lasted 18 hours. The CRS were ordered to leave because the government feared that their continued presence would provoke full-scale rebellion by the population of the area. Before they left, these guardians of "republican security" shot grenades at a group of children leaving church.

The same day, similar fighting took place in Saint-Nazaire, Toulouse, and Lyon, where students and young workers fought the police. Casualties numbered in the hundreds.

However, the decisive moment had passed. The working class had been fettered with sellout leadership too long for a general uprising to remain possible indefinitely. The turn of events in the bourgeoisie's favor was irreversible. Rioux and Backmann record the following interview with a trade union official:

Two weeks ago, the announcement of workers killed by the police would have brought the downfall of the regime. Even if we had wanted to, we wouldn't have been able to hold our guys back. Today, the public finds it unfortunate but almost normal: it is more impressed by a burned-up car than by the murder of a demonstrator.

The judgment perhaps reflects anti-working class bias by a piecard. It is nonetheless accurate for its estimate of the changing objective conditions.

From then on, the return to "normalcy" proceeded apace.

The Sorbonne and other universities were invaded by the police and re-opened.

The OAS leaders were set free, as promised.

Led by the CGT, the unions began a new round of bargaining, desperate to come up with a package they could submit to the rank and file. On June 13, Séguy made the most damning self-indictment yet uttered by a PCF official about the party's instrumental role in betraying the revolutionary aspirations of the working class:

In the sharpness of the class struggle, certain suspect elements—mostly renegades—have accused us insultingly of allowing the moment of the working class' seizure of power to slip by. The question of whether or not the time was ripe for insurrection never arose... If the workers were temporarily bothered by it, the mournful black flag of anarchy waved hysterically by the partisans of the so-called "revolutionary committees" soon



opened their eyes and put them on our side —on the side of those who have united the struggle of the red flags of the world's workers with the tricolor of our nation and the revolutionary history of our people.

By June 15, the **patronat** and the unions had come up with a package slightly better than the Grenelle agreements. This time, they were more confident of their ability to ram it down the workers' throats. The proposal included the following reforms:

- Wage hikes between 10 and 14%;
- Immediate reduction of the work week by one hour, with another half-hour to follow in September;
- 50% payment for strike days, with no obligation by the workers to make up for lost production time;
- Considerable broadening of the right to organize.

On June 18, SAVIEM, an automaker, ended its strike. Renault went back to work on the 19th. Berliet and Peugeot returned on the 20th. Citroën, the last major auto producer, the one with the most openly fascist on-the-job conditions, voted to resume production on June 24th.

By June 25th, the most important strike to take place in a capitalist country since World War II had come to a close.

The electoral results on the 23rd were predictable. The PCF had allowed DeGaulle to hoist it on its own petard. The revisionists, who had brayed so fatuously about the sanctity of the ballot box even while they claimed to be the official leaders of the mass movement, received only 20.3% of the total vote cast, as against 22.51% in 1967.

The epitaph of the May revolt had already been sounded by an anonymous 20-year-old worker quoted in *Le Monde* on June 2. "Too bad!" he said. It seems we came so close to something really new."

### LESSONS

Much of what follows will be redundant. It is included here for the sake of summary.

1. The contradictions of capitalism are insoluble. As it develops into imperialism, they become sharper. Therefore, the revolt that shook France in 1968 was not a fluke or a once-in-a-lifetime event, as many pundits still pretend, but rather a harbinger of things to come. Differences are inevitable, but likeness seems to be the main aspect of comparison between France and the U.S. Every day our party's estimate about the current intensification of class struggle is borne out in life. We can't predict when a situation similar to "May" will arise in our country. We should, however, anticipate such a development. Our outlook in this event should be **to move for as much power as we can.**

The revolutionary process does not go forward in a straight line. Before 1917 there was 1905. Before the CCP took power in 1949, it had to take to the hills in 1927. We should assume that the first opportunity for insurrection will not

necessarily lead to the permanent consolidation of state power.

Even if the PCF had been a revolutionary organization with a revolutionary base in the working class and other sections of the population, even if it had moved for power, it would have had to prepare for the inevitable counter-attack. The French bourgeoisie, as noted, would not have hesitated to throw the army against the workers. If the army had mutinied, the U.S., Germany, and other imperialist countries, would have invaded. This would obviously have led to civil war and would probably have provoked sharper struggle, uprisings, etc. in the other countries involved.

Our attitude should be that this sort of struggle is a good thing—exactly the kind of thing we want to see happen everywhere in the world. Our party and the working class can learn to hold power only by learning to fight for it.

The working class of France will inevitably rise again. They are worse off now than ever. But the opportunity that was open in France between May 27 and 30, 1968, does not arise every day. It may take years before French workers will have another such chance. Missing the opportunity is a far more devastating blunder (or, in this case, betrayal) than seizing it and suffering temporary defeat at the hands of superior forces. In order for our class to win, it must first "storm heaven."

2. The western imperialist nations are weaker collectively now than they were in 1968. As soon as he felt it was feasible, DeGaulle banned all revisionist groups to the left of the PCF. If we pursued our line in a similar situation, we would be attacked much more severely. The ruling class here is already more than a few steps down the road to fascism. We would have to conduct our work illegally. This would involve a major transformation of our apparatus, and too many of us, starting with the leadership, are not yet ideologically prepared for it.

3. The history of "May" defines the contradiction between "Reform and Revolution" about as sharply as it can be defined. The present paper emphasizes the role of the PCF in order to show that the failure to build a base for proletarian dictatorship in the working class must lead to the complete, abject betrayal of Marxism and workers' struggles. You fight either for socialism or for the maintenance of the profit system. There is no middle ground.

Carrying out the essence of the line in **R and R** will determine whether in the long run our party can lead a workers' uprising to power.

4. The ability to undermine the enemy from within is decisive. Therefore, work inside the army, the police, fascist organizations, and other instruments of bourgeois repression is necessary.

5. Despite all obstacles, "May" proved both the possibility and the necessity of the worker-student alliance. This alliance, along with its corollaries (the worker-"professional" alliance, the student-parent-teacher alliance, etc.) form



the cornerstone of our strategy for revolution. In recent years, we have not pushed the WSA as hard as we once did. This is an error. The campaign against racism, which should remain the main focus of our campus work, is fundamentally a drive to unite students with the most oppressed section of the proletariat. We need to revive the WSA. Strike support, unity with campus workers, the resumption of a modified "Work-in" at key industrial concentrations, bringing aspects of the party's shop work to the campuses, etc. are all possibilities to consider.

6. One spark can trigger an enormous explosion, provided the "powder is dry." It was dry in France in 1968. If anything, it is drier in our country today. One strike, one major campus action against racism or imperialism, one rebellion can unleash a torrent of class struggle that can paralyze the bourgeoisie and create the opportunity for insurrection. The working class needs guns. It also needs a revolutionary outlook.

With the line of our party today, we can play a decisive role in stimulating and guiding the revolutionary process.

There will be casualties, but just as 10,000,000 French strikers could have overwhelmed a few hundred thousand gendarmes and vacillating police, tens of millions of workers in our country will wipe out any repressive force the ruling class throws at them.

Here as in France, the ultimate enemy is revisionism—the enemy within.

The heroic French workers and students of "May" proved once and for all that revolutions against modern capitalism are inevitable. As our party wrote in Road to Revolution III: "We have a world to learn and a world to win."

We can absorb valuable lessons vicariously through the rich experience of our French brothers and sisters. Sooner rather than later we will have a chance to deepen our understanding of Marxism-Leninism in the heat of mass struggle. We should welcome the opportunity.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

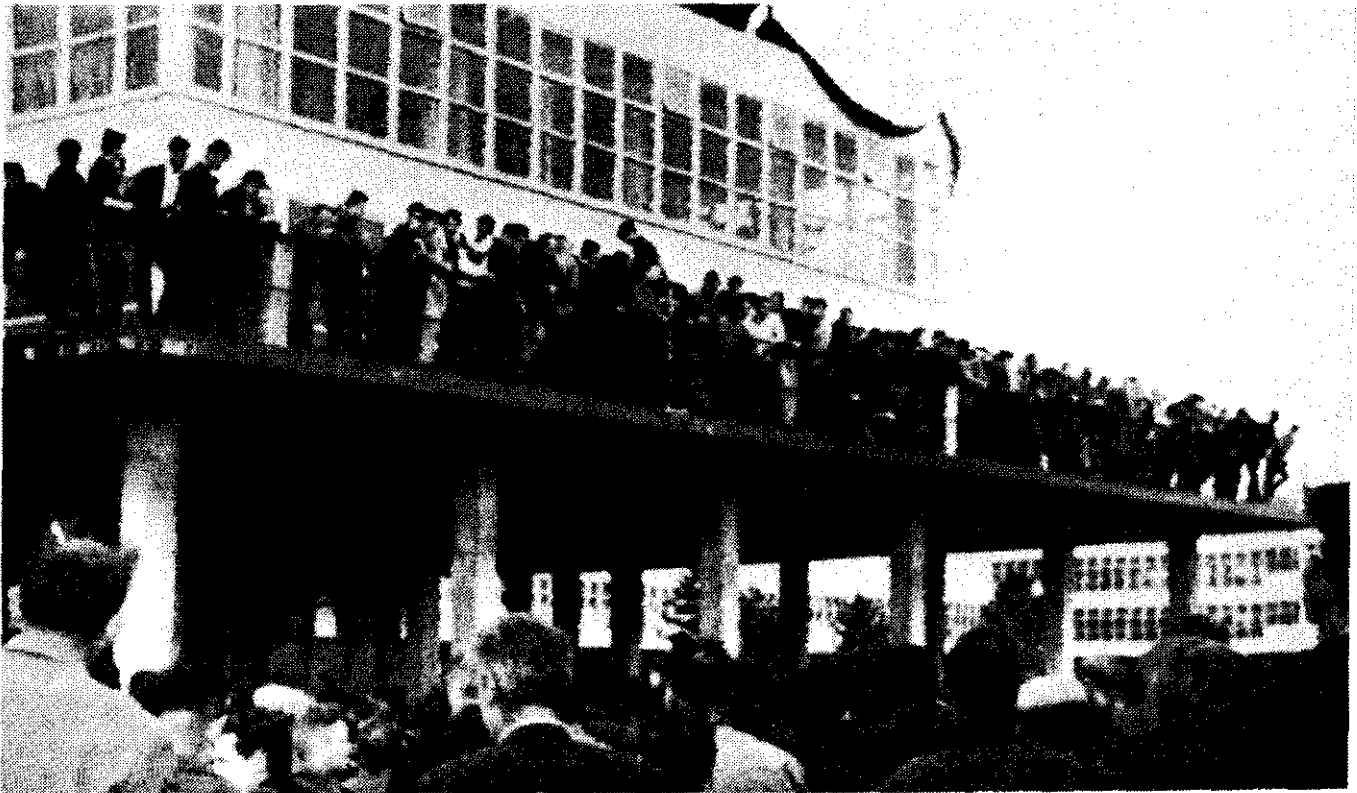
Most of the information and all of the quotes in this article come from the following sources:

John Gretton: *Students and Workers*; Macdonald, London, 1969.

Lucien Rioux and René Backmann: *L'Explosion de Mai*; Robert Laffont; Paris; 1969.

J.-Ph. Talbo: *La Grève à Flins*; Francois Maspéro; Paris; 1968.

Collective authorship: *Notre Arme C'est la Grève*; *La Grève chez Renault-Cléon*; Francois Maspéro; Paris; 1968.



May 16, 1968: Renault Workers at Flins  
Raise Red Flag over Occupied Factory.

# INTRODUCTION

The article which follows is a translation of an editorial entitled "The Theory and Practice of the Revolution," published in *Zeri i Popullit* (The People's Voice), organ of the Central Committee of the Albanian Party of Labor, on July 7, 1977.

In recent years, the Chinese "Communist" Party has used the reactionary theory of "three worlds" to justify China's alliance with U.S. imperialism and its abandonment of revolution. According to Mao Tse-tung, the world is divided into "three worlds":

1. the "superpowers," the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.
2. the "second world," Europe, Japan, Canada.
3. the "third world," the remaining countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Mao argued that China should ally with the "third world" governments, including those of such fascists as the Shah of Iran, Pinochet of Chile, and Mobutu of Zaire. The imperialists of the "second world" could be supported by communists, said Mao, when these imperialists were struggling against the superpowers ("anti-hegemonism," in the Chinese phrase). And it is o.k. to ally with one superpower—the U.S.—because the other superpower is the "main enemy of the peoples of the world." On this basis, Mao urged his followers in Western Europe to support NATO: the Chinese government invited reactionaries from the world over (including such "friends of the people" as Richard Nixon) to visit China to promote the "anti-hegemonism" struggle.

The Albanian Party of Labor correctly criticizes the reactionary "three worlds" theory for abandoning class analysis and the struggle for socialism. The primary division in the world is between classes (the working class and the bourgeoisie), not between nations. We welcome the APL's criticisms of the reactionary Chinese position. We wonder, however, why it took the APL so long to break with the Chinese positions. The Chinese "Communist" Party has been advocating alliance with the U.S. imperialists for six or seven years (PLP broke off fraternal relations with the Chinese "Communist" Party in 1971). The APL has not made a self-criticism for its silence on the

"theory of three worlds." This leads us to wonder if their current criticisms are based on revolutionary principles or if they are based on revision at the recent Chinese friendship with Yugoslavia's head revisionist, Tito (the Albanians have great hatred for Tito, who once tried to annex Albania).

We agree with the Albanian Party of Labor that communists can not ally with one imperialist against another. As war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. approaches, we must be clear on our task; to turn the guns around, to make imperialist war into a civil war for socialism. There must be no mistake on the role played by the revisionists, who are capitalists masquerading as socialists. The APL refers several times to the "socialist states"; what countries do they have in mind? The Chinese government is not a socialist government which has made a few mistakes in foreign policy; it is a revisionist government which rules over and exploits the working class (See "New Chinese Bosses Consolidate Their Power," *PL* magazine, April, 1977). The APL has not even made it clear that their criticisms are directed at the Chinese "Communist" Party. Communists have no business writing articles full of veiled references and obscure analogies; this hides politics from the masses. We must openly explain our positions.

In "The Theory and Practice of Revolution," the APL says, "In many countries the tasks of the anti-imperialist national-democratic revolution are still on the order of the day." As we pointed out in *Road to Revolution III*, capitalism is dominant throughout the world and therefore the struggle for socialism is 'the order of the day' for communists in every country. The bourgeoisie is no longer progressive; no section of the bourgeoisie can be the workers' ally. The bourgeoisie uses the 'national liberation movement' as a means to liberate itself: to promote capital accumulation, to tighten its hold over the workers, to weaken the grasp of the old imperialists. It is a mistake to view "the bourgeois-democratic revolution as an intermediate stage for the transition to socialist revolution": support for local bourgeoisies in their struggles against foreign bourgeoisies will only help one group of exploiters replace another.

The APL correctly says that the countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, like all countries, are divided into classes; the local government represents the ruling class, which in these capitalist countries oppresses the workers and their allies. Therefore, says the APL, we can't support reactionary "Third World" leaders like Pinochet in Chile. But would the APL support so-called "progressive" "Third World" capi-

talist governments? In the past, Albania has been a big spokesperson for the "Third World" at the U.N. Albania has supported many resolutions which praise "Third World" solidarity and self-reliance. Throughout the 1960's, the Albanians were popularizing a version of the "three worlds" theory. What is their attitude towards their past activities? The true test for any Marxist-Leninist party is its ability to criticize its mistakes.

During World War II the Albania Party of Labor successfully led a People's War, supported by the masses of workers and peasants, to victory over the occupying Nazis. After the formal inauguration of revisionism within the U.S.S.R. in 1956, the APL led the attack on Khrushchev-style revisionism, and was the first communist party to break with the rotten "C" PSU. Serious left forces in the world working-class movement learned a great deal from the APL's bold attack on revisionism. Our own party, the PLP owes its origins in no small part to the

lessons we learned from the APL at that time.

Nevertheless, despite these advances, the APL ultimately developed along revisionist lines itself. The APL break with the Chinese CP has not been a break with revisionism. The APL has still not broken with two-stage revolution and with nationalism. We don't think that Albania is a socialist country. Eventually, a new Communist movement will have to be built there, like all over the world, in order to organize for another socialist revolution. As all forms of revisionism get exposed more and more to the workers around the world, the objective conditions for a new international communist movement based upon a break with all kinds of alliances with any capitalists, upon the fight for socialist revolution, will come into existence. We in PLP welcome this development and, together with comrades in Canada, Mexico, and elsewhere, are working hard to bring it about.

# 'Theory and Practice of REVOLUTION'

(Zeri i Popullit, July 7, 1977)

**Analyzing the present international situation and the revolutionary processes developing within it, Comrade Enver Hoxha declared at the 7th Congress of the Albanian Party of Labor:**

The world is at a stage when the question of the revolution and national liberation is not just an aspiration and a perspective, but a problem taken up for solution. (E. Hoxha: Report at the 7th Congress of the APL; p. 186.)

This important statement of principle is based on the Leninist analysis of imperialism, on the definition given by Lenin of the essence of the present historical period, and is inspired by the historic mission of the proletariat to liberate itself and all mankind from the exploitation of man by man, from the capitalist system. It proceeds from a concrete Marxist-Leninist analysis of the major contradictions of our time. The theses of the 7th Congress of the Party are a reconfirmation of the Marxist-Leninist strategy of the revolution in present conditions.

In his brilliant works on imperialism, V.I. Lenin reached the conclusion that imperialism is capitalism in decline and decay, is the final phase of capitalism and the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat. Analyzing the phenomena which characterize imperialism, he wrote:

All these factors make the stage of development of capitalism today the epoch of the proletarian socialist revolution... This epoch has begun... Because of the objective conditions, the immediate all-round preparation of the proletariat for the seizure of political power, in order to carry through the economic and political measures which form the content of the socialist revolution, is placed on the agenda of the epoch in which we are living. (V.I. Lenin: **Collected Works**, Volume 24; p. 506.)



Enver Hoxha Declares National Holiday  
for Chou En-Lai, January 1976.

In defining the present epoch, Lenin proceeded from the class criterion. He stressed the importance of keeping in mind

... which class is in the center of this or that epoch, defining its main content, the main direction of its development, the main characteristics of the historic conditions of this given epoch, etc. (V.I. Lenin: **Collected Works**, Volume 21; p. 147.)

Defining the fundamental content of the new historical epoch as the stage of imperialism and proletarian revolutions, he remained consistently loyal to the teachings of Marx about the historic mission of the proletariat as the new social force which will carry out the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist society of oppression and exploitation and build the new society—classless communist society.

"The Communist Manifesto" of Marx and Engels and their call "Workers of all countries, unite!" announced that the fundamental contradiction of human society was now that between labor and capital, and the proletariat was called upon to resolve it by revolution. With his analysis of imperialism, Lenin showed that the contradictions of capitalist society had reached their culminating stage and that the world had entered the period of proletarian revolutions and the triumph of socialism.

The great October Socialist Revolution confirmed the brilliant conclusions of Marx and Lenin in practice. After the death of Lenin, too, the international communist movement resolutely adhered to his teachings about the present epoch, adhered to his revolutionary strategy. The triumph of the socialist revolution in a number of other countries confirmed that the Leninist thesis on the present epoch as that of the transition from capitalism to socialism reflects the fundamental law of the development of present-day human society. The collapse of the colonial system, the winning of political independence by the overwhelming majority of the countries of Asia,

Africa, etc., is a further confirmation of the Leninist theory on the epoch and the revolution. The fact that the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and the revolution were betrayed in the Soviet Union and a number of formerly socialist countries does not alter in the least the Leninist thesis on the character of the present epoch, because this is nothing but a zigzag in the course of the inevitable victory of socialism over capitalism on a world scale.

The Albanian Party of Labor has always consistently upheld these Marxist-Leninist conclusions. Comrade Enver Hoxha has said:

The fundamental features of our epoch, as the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism, of the struggle between two opposing social systems, of the proletarian and national-liberation revolutions, of the collapse of imperialism and the liquidation of the colonial system, of the triumph of socialism and communism on a world scale, are becoming more pronounced and more clearly obvious each day. (E. Hoxha: Report at the 5th Congress of the APL; p. 5.)

Marxist-Leninists have always based their definition of the present epoch and their revolutionary strategy on the analysis of the major social contradictions which characterize this epoch. What are those contradictions? Following the triumph of the socialist revolution in Russia, Lenin and Stalin spoke about four such contradictions:

the contradiction between labor and capital in the capitalist countries;

the contradiction between the two opposing systems—socialist and capitalist;

the contradiction between the oppressed peoples and nations and imperialism;

the contradictions between the imperialist powers.

These are the contradictions which constitute the objective basis of the development of present-

day revolutionary movements, which—in their entirety—constitute the great process of the world revolution in our epoch. The whole of present-day world development confirms that since the time of Lenin these contradictions have not waned or disappeared, but have become more acute and are more clearly obvious than ever before. The recognition and admission of the existence of these contradictions constitute the basis for defining a correct revolutionary strategy.

On the other hand, to deny the existence of these contradictions, to hide them, to ignore one or the other contradiction, to distort their real content—as various revisionists and opportunists are doing—causes confusion and disorientation in the revolutionary movement, serves as a basis for building up and advocating distorted, pseudo-revolutionary strategy and tactics.

At present, there is a great deal of talk about the division of the world into the so-called “first,” “second,” and “third” worlds, about the “non-aligned” world, about the world “of the developing countries,” about the “north-south” world, etc. Each of the supporters of these divisions presents his own “theory” as the most correct strategy, which allegedly corresponds to the real conditions of the present international situation. But, as Comrade Enver Hoxha stressed at the 7th Congress:

All these terms, which refer to various political forces operating in the world today, cover up and fail to bring out the class character of these political forces, the fundamental contradictions of our epoch, the key problem which is predominant today on a national and international scale—the ruthless struggle between the bourgeois-imperialist world on the one hand, and socialism, the world proletariat and its natural allies on the other. (E. Hoxha: Report at the 7th Congress of the APL; p. 203.)

When Marxist-Leninists speak about the world and various countries, and classify them, they do so according to the principles of dialectical and historical materialism. They judge, first and foremost, from the socio-economic order existing in various countries, according to the class criterion. Precisely from this angle, V.I. Lenin wrote in 1921:

Now there are two worlds: the old world of capitalism, which is plunged into confusion but which will never retreat, and the new world which is growing up, which is still very weak, but which will grow because it is invincible. (V.I. Lenin: *Collected Works*, Volume 33; p. 153-4.)

J.V. Stalin, in his well-known article “Two Camps” published in 1919, also stressed:

The world has been divided definitely and finally into two camps: the camp of imperialism and the camp of socialism... The struggle between these two camps constitutes the pivot of all life in our time; it characterizes all the present internal

and external policies of advocates of the old and the new world. (J.V. Stalin: *Works*, Volume 4; p. 226.)

The view of our Party is that today, also, we should speak about the socialist world, as Lenin and Stalin did, that the Leninist criterion remains valid. The argument of the theoreticians of the “three worlds,” etc., that because of the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and some other former socialist countries, the socialist camp has been “eliminated,” is without foundation, is in complete opposition to the teachings of Leninism and the class criterion.

**The revisionist betrayal, the return of the Soviet Union and a number of formerly socialist countries to capitalism, the spreading of modern revisionism widely in the international communist and workers’ movement—all these were a heavy blow to the cause of revolution and socialism. But this by no means implies that socialism has been liquidated as a system and that the thesis of the division of the world into two opposing systems must be abandoned. Socialism exists and is advancing in the true socialist countries which remain loyal to Marxism-Leninism, such as the People’s Socialist Republic of Albania. Hence the socialist system, as a system which is opposed to the capitalist system, exists objectively, just as the contradiction and the life-and-death struggle between it and capitalism exists.**

By ignoring socialism as a social system, the so-called “theory of three worlds” ignores the greatest historical victory of the international proletariat, ignores the fundamental contradiction of our time—that between socialism and capitalism. It is clear that such a theory, which ignores socialism, is anti-Leninist. It leads to the weakening of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the countries where socialism is being built, while calling on the world proletariat, in effect, not to rise in socialist revolution. And this is not to be wondered at: departure from the class criterion in assessing the situation can only lead to conclusions in opposition to the interests of the revolution and the proletariat.

In his works, Lenin, great and consistent Marxist that he was, often analyzed the capitalist world and the relationship of forces within it. This he did always to serve the revolution, to define the tasks facing the proletariat, the tasks of the Communist Parties, the tasks of the first socialist state towards the world proletarian revolution, to show who were the genuine allies of the revolution and who were its enemies.

Lenin gives us a brilliant example in this direction in the theses and reports at the 2nd Congress of the Communist International in 1920:

Now it must be ‘proved’ through the practice of the revolutionary parties that they are sufficiently conscious, organized and linked with the exploited masses, that they are sufficiently determined and capable of making use of the crisis for the revolution to be crowned with success, with victory.

And the main reason for our gathering at this congress of the Communist International is precisely to prepare this 'proof,' (V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Volume 31: p. 250.)

However, the so-called theory of "three worlds" does not lay down any tasks for the revolution. On the contrary, it "forgets" this. In the scheme of the "three worlds," the fundamental contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie does not exist.

Apart from this, another thing which strikes the eye in this division of the world is the non-class view of what is called the "third world," its ignoring of classes and the class struggle, its treatment of the regimes and political forces of this world as a single entity. It ignores the contradictions between the oppressed peoples and the reactionary, pro-imperialist forces of their own countries.

In the countries exploited by imperialism, in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the peoples are waging a determined struggle for freedom, independence and national sovereignty against old and new colonialism. This is a just, revolutionary-liberation struggle which enjoys the unreserved support of Marxist-Leninists and of all progressive forces. This struggle cannot fail to be directed against a number of enemies: against the imperialist oppressors—and first and foremost against the two superpowers, as the greatest exploiters and international gendarmes, the most dangerous enemies of all the peoples of the world; against the reactionary local comprador bourgeoisie, linked by a thousand and one threads with the foreign imperialists; against the still pronounced remnants of feudalism, which rely on the foreign imperialists and are united with the reactionary comprador bourgeoisie against the people's revolution; against the reactionary and fascist-type regimes—representatives and defenders of the domination of these three enemies.

Therefore it is absurd to pretend that one can fight against the external imperialist enemies without at the same time fighting against the internal enemies who are the allies and collaborators of imperialism. To this day there has never been a national-democratic, anti-imperialist liberation struggle which has not had internal, reactionary, anti-national enemies. It is completely wrong to characterize all strata of the bourgeoisie in such countries—including the comprador bourgeoisie—as "anti-imperialist forces," as does the so-called theory of "three worlds." To follow this theory means to divert the revolutionary movement in the colonial-type countries from the right road, to separate it from the proletarian revolution in the other countries, to set the struggle of the peoples and the proletariat of those countries on to an anti-Marxist and revisionist course.

Marxism-Leninism teaches that the national question must always be seen as secondary to the cause of the revolution. From this standpoint,

Marxist-Leninists support every national movement which is effectively directed against imperialism. Lenin stressed:

As Communists we must support and will support the bourgeois liberation movements in the colonial countries only in those cases where these movements are really revolutionary, when their representatives do not hinder us from educating and organizing the peasantry and the broad masses of the exploited in the revolutionary spirit. If these conditions are lacking, then the Communists in those countries must fight against the reformist bourgeoisie. (V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works." Volume 31; p. 266-7.)

But the advocates of the theory of the "third world" include in the "national liberation movement"—even as "the main force in the struggle against imperialism"—the bargaining of the King of Saudi Arabia and the Shah of Iran with the U.S. oil monopolies, and their arms deals with the Pentagon involving billions upon billions of dollars. According to this logic, the oil sheikhs who deposit their money in the banks of Wall Street and the City are "fighters against imperialism," while the U.S. imperialists, who sell weapons to these reactionary oppressive regimes, are "assisting the patriotic forces."

Facts prove that today the democratic and anti-imperialist liberation revolution can be waged consistently and carried through to the end only if it is led by the proletariat, with its party at its head, in alliance with the broad masses of the peasantry and other genuinely anti-imperialist forces. As early as 1905, in his book "Two Tactics," Lenin showed that in the conditions of imperialism the characteristic of the bourgeois-democratic revolution is that the force most interested in carrying this revolution forward to completion is not the bourgeoisie (which vacillates and has the tendency to compromise with the reactionary feudal forces against the revolu-



Hoxha's Hypocrisy: Greeting Cambodian Sell-out Sihanouk, 1976.

tionary drive of the masses), but the proletariat, which sees the bourgeois-democratic revolution as an intermediate stage for the transition to the socialist revolution. The same thing must be said about the national liberation movements of our time. J.V. Stalin emphasized that, following the October Revolution,

...the epoch of the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries, the epoch of the awakening of the proletariat of those countries, the epoch of its hegemony in the revolution, began. (J.V. Stalin: "Works," Volume 10; p. 237-8.)

These Leninist teachings assume a special value and importance in present conditions. Today two tendencies have developed in the world and are operating with great force, tendencies to which Lenin drew attention; on the one hand, the tendency to the breaking-up of national boundaries and the internationalization of economic and political life on the part of the capitalist monopolies; on the other hand, the tendency to the strengthening of the struggle for national independence on the part of various countries.

In relation to the first tendency, in many countries liberated from direct colonial rule the ties of the local bourgeoisie with foreign imperialist capital have not only been maintained, but are being strengthened and extended in many neo-colonialist forms, such as the multinational companies, various economic and financial mergers, and so on. This bourgeoisie, which occupies key positions in the economic and political life of these countries, is growing; it is a pro-imperialist force and an enemy of the liberation movement.

In relation to the other tendency, that of the strengthening of the national independence movement against imperialism in the former colonial countries, this is linked first of all and mainly with the increase of the proletariat in those countries. Thus, ever more favorable conditions are being created for the broad, consistent development of the anti-imperialist democratic revolutions, for the proletariat to lead them, and consequently, for their transition to a higher stage, that of the struggle for socialism.

Marxist-Leninists do not confuse the genuine liberation and socialist aspirations of the peoples and proletariat of the countries of the "third World" with the aims and policies of the oppressive comprador bourgeoisie of those countries.

To speak in general terms about the so-called "third world" as the "main force of the struggle against imperialism," as the supporters of the theory of the "three worlds" do, without making any distinction between the genuine anti-imperialist and revolutionary forces and the pro-imperialist, reactionary and fascist forces in power in a number of developing countries, means a flagrant departure from the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, means to preach typically opportunist views, causing confusion and disorganization among the revolutionary forces. In essence, according to the theory of the "three worlds," the

peoples of those countries must not fight, for instance, against the bloody fascist dictatorships of Geisel in Brazil, of Pinochet in Chile, of Suharto in Indonesia, of the Shah of Iran or the King of Jordan, because they, allegedly, are part of "the revolutionary motive force which is driving the wheel of history forward." On the contrary, according to this theory, the peoples and revolutionaries ought to support the reactionary forces and regimes of the "third world"—in other words, ought to give up the revolution.

**U.S. imperialism, Soviet social-imperialism, and the other capitalist states have bound the classes which are ruling in most of the countries of the so-called "third world" to them with a thousand threads. Being dependent on the foreign monopolies and wanting to maintain their domination of the broad masses of their own peoples, these classes are, of course, trying to create the impression that they form "a democratic bloc of independent states," which aim to exert pressure on U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism and to stop their interference in their internal affairs.**

But Lenin stressed to the Communist Parties that

...it is essential constantly to expose and explain to the broadest masses of the working people of all the countries, especially of the more backward countries, the lies systematically used by the imperialist powers, which, under the form of the creation of politically independent states, in fact create states entirely dependent on them both from the economic point of view and from the financial and military point of view. (V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works." Volume 31; p. 159.)

The Albanian Party of Labor has always stood loyal to these immortal teachings of Lenin.

At the 7th Congress of the APL, Comrade Enver Hoxha stressed:

Regarding the assessment of the policy pursued by various states and governments, Marxists proceed from the class criterion, from the positions these governments and states maintain towards imperialism and socialism, towards their own peoples.

On the basis of these teachings the revolutionary movement and the proletariat build their strategy and tactics, seek out and unite with their true allies in the struggle against imperialism, the bourgeoisie and reaction. The terms 'third world,' 'non-aligned states,' or 'developing countries' create the illusion among the broad masses fighting for national and social liberation that a roof has allegedly been found beneath which to shelter from the threat of the superpowers. These terms conceal the real situation in the majority of those countries which, in this or that manner, are politically, ideologically and



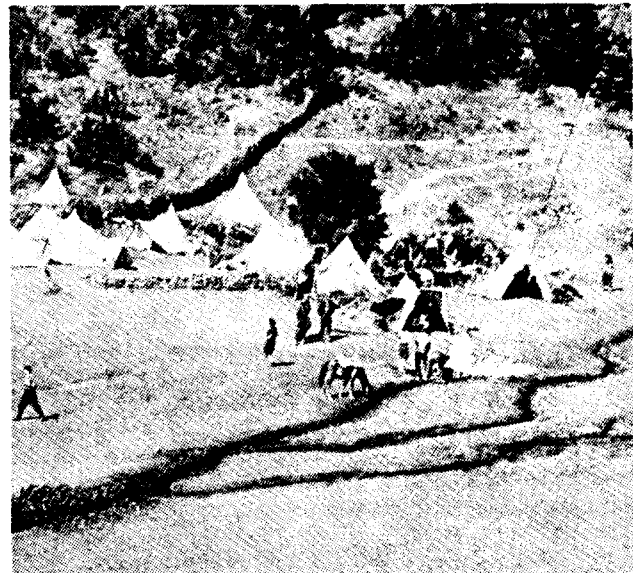
economically bound to, and depend on, the two superpowers and the former colonial metropolises. (E. Hoxha: Report at the 7th Congress of the APL; p. 204.)

The present theories about the so-called "third world," etc., are designed to curb the revolution and to defend capitalism, which, it is suggested, should not be hindered in the exercise of its hegemony, but enjoined to practice forms of domination somewhat more acceptable to the peoples. Despite the difference in labels, the so-called "third world" and "non-aligned world" are as alike as two peas. It is virtually impossible to distinguish which countries belong to the "third world," and what distinguishes them from those which belong to the "non-aligned world." Efforts are, in fact, being made to create another grouping, that of the so-called "developing countries," lumping together the countries both of the "third world" and of the "non-aligned world." The authors of this theory, too, are covering up the class contradictions, advocating the maintenance of the substance of the status quo, advocating merely that the imperialist powers should provide some "hand-outs" to assist in building up the economies of the "developing countries." In this way, according to the authors of this theory, a "new international order" can be established in which rich and poor, exploiters and exploited, will live in Khrushchovite "peaceful coexistence" without wars and in class peace.

Precisely because of the fact that these three inventions have the same basic content and aims, it is to be noticed that the leaders of the "third world," of the "non-aligned world," and of the "developing countries" are in harmony: they are deceiving the masses with their sermons in order to divert them from revolutionary struggle.

**Not only does the theory of the "three worlds" not take account of the contradiction between the two opposing social systems of capitalism and socialism, nor of that between labor and capital, neither does it analyze the other major contradiction—that between oppressed peoples and world imperialism, which it reduces to the contradiction with the two superpowers (indeed, mainly with one of them). This "theory" totally ignores the contradiction between the oppressed peoples and nations and the other imperialist powers. What is more, the partisans of the theory of the "three worlds" call for alliance of the "third world" with U.S. imperialism against Soviet social-imperialism.**

One of the arguments used to justify the division of the world into "three worlds" is that at the present juncture the imperialist camp which existed after the Second World War, in which U.S. imperialism held undivided hegemony, has allegedly disintegrated and ceased to exist as a result of the unequal development of imperialism. The supporters of this "theory" claim that there can be no talk of a single world imperialism today, because on the one hand the Western European imperialists have risen against the USA, and on the other hand a fierce and ever-increasing rivalry has developed between the two



1942: Then-Revolutionary PLA Holds First Youth Congress under Nazi Attack, imperialist superpowers—the USA and the Soviet Union.

In the stage of imperialism, as a result of the unequal development of various capitalist countries, the inter-imperialist contradictions become constantly deeper; inter-imperialist alliances, blocs and groupings are created and broken up according to circumstances. But this does not mean that, as a result of these contradictions, the imperialist world as a social system has ceased to exist and has become divided into several "worlds." On the contrary, present-day facts speak not of the disintegration of world imperialism, but of its concentration into two great imperialist blocs: on the one hand is the "western" imperialist bloc, headed by U.S. imperialism, the instruments of which include NATO, the European Common Market, etc.; on the other hand is the "eastern" bloc, dominated by Soviet social-imperialism, which has as the instruments of its expansionist, hegemonistic and warmongering policy the Warsaw Treaty Organization and Comecon.

In the scheme of "three worlds," the so-called "second world" includes countries which, from the point of view of their social system, have no essential difference either from the two superpowers or from certain countries included in the "third world." It is true that the countries of this world have definite contradictions with the two superpowers, but these are contradictions of an inter-imperialist character, like those between the two superpowers themselves. In the first place, they are contradictions over markets, spheres of influence, zones for the export of capital and the exploitation of the riches of others. Such are the contradictions between West German, Japanese, French, British, etc. imperialism with one or the other superpower, as well as with one another.

Certainly, these contradictions weaken the world imperialist system, and are in the interests



of the struggle of the proletariat. But it is anti-Marxist to identify the contradictions between various imperialist powers and the two super-powers with the struggle of the working masses against imperialism, for its destruction.

It cannot happen that the so-called countries of the "second world"—that is, the monopoly bourgeois ruling classes of these countries—become allies of the oppressed peoples and nations in their struggle against the two superpowers and world imperialism. History since the Second World War shows clearly that these states have supported and still support the aggressive policies and acts of U.S. imperialism, as in Korea and Vietnam, the Middle East, Africa, etc. They are ardent defenders of neo-colonialism. The "second world" allies of Soviet social-imperialism took part, jointly with it, in the occupation of Czechoslovakia and are zealous supporters of its predatory expansionist policy in various zones of the world. The states of the "second world" are the main economic and military support of the aggressive, expansionist alliances of the two superpowers.

The contradictions in the enemy camp should certainly be exploited. But in what way and with what aim? The principle is that they should always be exploited in favor of the revolution, so as to lead to the strengthening of the revolutionary movement and not to its weakening and dying out, so as to lead to an ever more active mobilization of the revolutionary forces in the struggle against their enemies, and without creating any kind of illusions about them.

The absolutisation of inter-imperialist contradictions and the under-estimation of the basic contradiction, that between revolution and counter-revolution, the placing of the exploitation of the contradictions in the enemy camp alone in the centre of strategy and the "forgetting" of the main thing—increase of the revolutionary spirit and the development of the revolutionary movement, are in total opposition to the teachings of Marxism-Leninism. It is anti-Marxist to preach unity with the allegedly weaker imperialisms to oppose the stronger, to side with the bourgeoisie of one country in order to oppose that of another, under the pretext of exploiting contradictions. Lenin stressed that the tactic of the exploitation of contradictions in the ranks of the enemy must be used to raise and not lower the general level of proletarian consciousness.

The Albanian Party of Labor has always consistently upheld and upholds these immortal Leninist teachings. As Comrade Enver Hoxha expressed it:

We should intensify the struggle against them, should exploit the great contradictions among the enemies properly and correctly in our favor, in favor of the socialist states and peoples who rise in revolution... Therefore, we must always keep the iron hot and attack them without respite. (E. Hoxha: Reports and Speeches, 1970-1; p. 460-1.)

In presenting the so-called "second world," which includes most capitalist and neo-colonialist states, as allies of the "third world" in struggle against U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism, the anti-revolutionary character of the theory of the "three worlds" is quite obvious.

It is an anti-revolutionary theory because it preaches social peace, collaboration with the bourgeoisie, giving up the revolution, to the proletariat of the countries of the "second world" (Western Europe, Japan, Canada, etc.) because the struggle against Soviet social-imperialism is alleged to require it.

It is also a pseudo-anti-imperialist theory because it justifies and supports the neo-colonialist, exploiting policy of the imperialist powers of the "second world" and calls upon the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America not to oppose this policy, allegedly for the sake of the struggle against the super-powers. In this way the anti-imperialist and anti-social-imperialist struggle of the peoples of the "second world" and of the so-called "third world" is weakened and sabotaged.

Revolutionary strategy is that which puts the revolution in the centre. In Stalin's words:

The strategy and tactics of Leninism constitute the science of leadership of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. (J.V. Stalin: "Works," Volume 6; p. 166.)

The Leninist strategy considers the world proletarian revolution as a single process, made up of several great revolutionary trends of our era, at the centre of which stands the international proletariat.

This revolutionary process is going on unceasingly in the countries which are advancing on the true road of socialism. It manifests itself as a fierce, irreconcilable struggle between the socialist and the capitalist road to ensure the final triumph of the former over the latter, to bar all the paths to the danger of turning back through counter-revolutionary violence, imperialist aggression or peaceful bourgeois-revisionist degeneration. The revolutionaries and peoples of the whole world are watching this struggle with active interest, for it is a vital question for the cause of the revolution and socialism all over the world. They see in the socialist countries a powerful base and centre of the revolution, as the realization in practice of the ideals for which they themselves are fighting. Lenin's conception of the necessity of the aid and support of the international proletariat for the country where the socialist revolution has triumphed, is immortal. But this always implies that we are speaking about a genuinely socialist country, which implements the revolutionary teachings of Marxism-Leninism with the utmost vigor and consistently adheres to proletarian internationalism. Otherwise, if it is transformed into a capitalist country, maintaining only a fraudulent "socialist" disguise, it cannot be supported.

The revolutionaries and the peoples know that the successes of the socialist countries are



blows which weaken imperialism, the bourgeoisie and international reaction, that they are a direct aid and support for the revolutionary and liberation struggles of the workers and peoples.

Lenin and Stalin always considered the revolutionary task of the proletariat of a socialist country, not only as that of making every effort to build socialism in its own country, but also as that of supporting in an all-embracing way the revolutionary and liberation movements in other countries. As Stalin said:

Lenin never regarded the Soviet Republic as an aim in itself. He always regarded it as an indispensable link in strengthening the revolutionary movement in the western and eastern countries, as an indispensable link to facilitate the victory of the workers of the whole world over capital. Lenin knew that this was the only correct concept, not only from the international point of view, but also from the point of view of preserving the Soviet Republic itself. (*Works*, vol. 6, p. 60.)

Precisely for this reason, a truly socialist state cannot include itself in such groupings as the so-called "third world" or "non-aligned countries," in which any kind of class alignments have been erased and which serve only to divert the peoples from the road of the struggle against imperialism and for the revolution.

Only the revolutionary, freedom-loving and progressive forces, the revolutionary movement of the working class and the anti-imperialist movement of the oppressed peoples and nations, can be true and reliable allies of the socialist countries. Therefore, to preach the division into "three worlds," to ignore the fundamental contradictions of our times, to call for alliance with the monopoly bourgeoisie and of oppressed peoples with the imperialist powers of the so-called "second world," is to the disadvantage of the international proletariat, the peoples and the socialist states. As Stalin emphasized:

I cannot imagine an occasion where the interests of our Soviet Republic might require our sister parties to make deviations to the right... I cannot imagine how the interests of our republic, which is the basis of the revolutionary proletarian movement in the entire world, could want not the maximum of the revolutionary spirit and political activity of the workers of the west, but the reduction of this activity, the dying down of the revolutionary spirit. (J.V. Stalin: "Works," Volume 8; p. 111.)

In the metropolises of capitalism the process of world proletarian revolution is embodied in the growing class struggles of the proletariat and the other working and progressive strata against the bourgeois exploitation and oppression, against the attempts of the bourgeoisie to load the burden of the present crisis of the world capitalist system on to the backs of the working people, against the revival of fascism, etc. Amongst the broad masses of the working people, headed by the proletariat, the consciousness is developing more and more that the only way to escape from the crisis and the other evils of capitalism, from bourgeois exploitation, from fascist violence and imperialist war, is the way of socialist revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Life and facts prove that neither the bourgeoisie nor its open and disguised lackeys—from the social democrats to the modern revisionists—can stem the rising tide of revolutionary struggle. In the words of Comrade Enver Hoxha:

The present struggle of the world proletariat once again proves the fundamental thesis of Marxism-Leninism that the working class and its revolutionary struggle in the bourgeois and revisionist world cannot be suppressed either with violence or with demagoguery. (E. Hoxha: Report at the 7th Congress of the APL; p. 186-7.)

Objective conditions are becoming ever more favorable for the revolution in the developed capitalist countries. There the proletarian revolution is now a problem taken up for solution. Quite correctly, the Marxist-Leninist Parties, which have taken up the banner of the revolution betrayed and discarded by the revisionists, have undertaken the tasks and set to work seriously to prepare the proletariat and its allies for the coming revolutionary battles, for the overthrow of the bourgeois order. This revolutionary struggle, which is hitting the world capitalist and imperialist system in its main strongholds, enjoys and ought to enjoy the full support of the true socialist countries and of all revolutionary and freedom-loving people throughout the world. But today the modern revisionists, the supporters of the theory of the "three worlds" and of "non-alignment," while saying nothing about the revolution and preparation for it, are in fact seeking to sabotage it and to keep the status quo of the capitalist order in existence.

In seeking to divert the attention of the proletariat from revolution, the authors of the theory of the "three worlds" preach that, at the present time, the question of the preservation of national independence from the danger of aggression by the super-powers—especially by Soviet social-imperialism, which they regard as the main enemy—is the primary issue. The question of defining which is the main enemy on an international scale at a particular time is of great importance for the revolutionary movement. Bearing in mind the course of events and the class analysis of the present situation, our Party stresses that American imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism, these two superpowers, are

...the main and biggest enemies of the peoples. (E. Hoxha: Report at the 7th Congress of the APL; p. 219.)

today, and that, as such

...they constitute an equal danger. (E. Hoxha: *ibid.*; p. 219.)

Soviet social-imperialism is a savage, aggressive imperialism, thirsty for expansion, which is pursuing a typically colonialist and neo-colonialist policy which is based on the power of capital and arms.

In rivalry with U.S. imperialism, this new imperialism is struggling to seize strategic positions and to get its grip on all regions and continents. It stands out as a fire extinguisher of the revolution, as a suppressor of the liberation struggle of the peoples. But this in no way means that the other main enemy of the peoples, U.S. imperialism, is less dangerous, as the advocates of the "three worlds" theory claim. Distorting the truth and seeking to deceive the peoples, they claim that U.S. imperialism is allegedly no longer warmongering, that it has been weakened, is in decline, is now only a "timid mouse." In a word, they claim that U.S. imperialism is turning peaceful. Matters have reached the point that even the U.S. military presence in various countries, such as Germany, Belgium, Italy, Japan and other countries, is justified and described as "a factor for defence." Such views are extremely dangerous for the freedom of the peoples, and for the fate of the revolution. Such theses foster illusions about the aggressive, hegemonic and expansionist character of both U.S. imperialism and Soviet imperialism.

The proletariat and the proletarian revolution are faced with the task of overthrowing every imperialism, and especially that of the two superpowers. Any imperialism, by its very nature, is always a savage enemy of the proletarian revolution; therefore, to divide imperialist powers into more or less dangerous from the strategic viewpoint of the world revolution, is wrong. Practice has proved that the two superpowers, to the same degree and to the same extent, represent the main enemy for socialism and for the freedom and independence of nations, represent the greatest force defending exploitation, represent a direct danger that mankind will be hurled into a Third World War. To ignore this great truth, to underestimate the danger of one or the

other superpower—or, even worse, to call for unity with one superpower against the other, is fraught with catastrophic consequences and great dangers to the future of the revolution and the freedom of the peoples.

Of course, it happens and may happen that this or that country is oppressed or directly threatened by one of the superpowers. But this in no way and in no case means that the other superpower does not constitute a danger to that same country, and even less that the other superpower has become a "friend" of that country. The principle "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" cannot be applied when it is a matter of the two imperialist superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States of America. These two superpowers are fighting the revolution with every means at their disposal, are making every effort to sabotage the revolution and socialism and to drown them in blood. Experience shows that they launch fierce attacks, sometimes in one region, sometimes in another, that each is striving furiously to replace its influence for that of the other. As soon as the people of a particular country manage to rid themselves of the domination of one superpower, the other steps in—ample proof of this being provided in the Middle East and Africa.

The other major trend of the world revolution in our time is the national liberation movement of the peoples, which is spearheaded against imperialism, neo-colonialism and colonial vestiges. Marxist-Leninists are fully in solidarity with, and give their fullest support to, the national liberation movements of the oppressed peoples, regarding it as an extremely important factor in the development of the world revolutionary process.

The Albanian Party of Labor has always supported the peoples who are fighting for their national freedom and independence:

We stand for the unity of the world proletariat and all the genuine anti-imperialist forces which will smash with their struggle the aggressive plans of the imperialist and social-imperialist war-mongers. Consistent in their Marxist-Leninist line, the Albanian Party of Labor and the Albanian people... in the future, too, will spare no effort and will fight together with all the other anti-imperialist and anti-social-imperialist peoples, with all the Marxist-Leninist Parties and all the progressive forces, to foil the plans and manoeuvres of the enemy and ensure the triumph of the cause of the freedom and security of the peoples. At all times our country will be found standing beside all those peoples whose freedom, independence and rights are threatened or violated. (E. Hoxha: Report at 7th Congress of the APL; p. 228.)

Comrade Enver Hoxha, on behalf of the Albanian Party and state, proclaimed this firm stand also in his speech to the People's Assembly in connection with the approval of the new constitution:

Today the overwhelming bulk of the peoples of the world are making great efforts and are strongly opposing the colonial laws and neo-colonialist domination, together with those rules, practices and customs and unequal agreements, old and new, established by the bourgeoisie to maintain the exploitation of the peoples, and the pernicious distinctions and discriminations in international relations associated with them... The progressive peoples and democratic states that refuse to reconcile themselves to this situation and are fighting to establish their national sovereignty over their own resources... enjoy the full solidarity and support of the Albanian people and state. (E. Hoxha: Speech in National Assembly, December 27th, 1976.)

Ever since the time of Lenin, Marxist-Leninists have always regarded the national liberation struggle of the peoples and nations oppressed at the hands of imperialism as a powerful ally and reserve of the world proletarian revolution.

In the countries which have won full or partial political independence, the revolution is at various stages of development and is not faced with the same tasks everywhere. Among them, there are states which are directly faced with the proletarian revolution, while in many other countries the tasks of the anti-imperialist national-democratic revolution are still on the order of the day. But in every case, since this latter revolution is aimed at international imperialism, it is an ally and reserve of the world proletarian revolution.

But does this mean that such countries must remain at the national-democratic stage and that revolutionaries should not speak about and prepare for the socialist revolution, for fear that stages may be skipped or that someone may call them "Blanquists"? Lenin spoke of the need for transforming the bourgeois-democratic revolution into socialist revolution in the colonial countries when the former was still only in embryo. In criticizing Blanquism, Marx and Engels did not describe either the 1848 revolution or the Paris Commune as premature. Marxism-Leninism never confuses petty-bourgeois impatience, which leads to the skipping of stages, with the essential need for the uninterrupted development of the revolution.

Lenin pointed out that the revolution in the colonial and dependent countries must be pushed ahead. Since Lenin's time, great changes have taken place in those countries. In his genius Lenin predicted these changes and his response to them is to be found in the Leninist theses on the world revolutionary process. The carrying through of the proletarian revolution is a universal law and the main trend of our epoch. All countries without exception, inclusive of Indonesia and Chile, Brazil and Zaire, must and will go through it regardless of what stages will have to be traversed in order to get there. If one loses sight of this objective, if one preaches the preservation of the status quo and theorises about "avoiding the skipping of stages," if one forgets to fight against Suharto and Pinochet, Geisel and Mobutu, this means that one is not

for national-democratic revolution.

Europe, too, must and will pass through the proletarian revolution. Whoever loses sight of this perspective, whoever fails to make preparations towards this end, who declares that the revolution "has moved to Asia and Africa" and that the European proletariat should join its own "wise and good bourgeoisie" on the pretext of defending national independence—such a person is in an anti-Leninist position and is neither for the defence of the homeland nor the freedom of the nation. Whoever "forgets" that both the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO must be combatted, that both Comecon and the EEC must be rejected, takes the side of imperialism and becomes its slave.

In the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" Marx and Engels wrote:

A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of Communism... All the forces of old Europe... have united to wage a holy war against this spectre.

This observation of Marx and Engels is valid for our day too. The temporary setback suffered by the revolution by reason of the revisionist betrayal, as well as the economic potential and oppressive military strength which imperialism and social-imperialism oppose to the revolutionary movement and the ideas of communism, have not been able and will not be able to change the course of history, nor overcome the invincible strength of Marxism-Leninism.

Marxism-Leninism is the revolutionary ideology that has entered deep into the consciousness of the proletariat and is exerting an ever greater influence on the broad masses of the peoples. The impact of this theory is so strong that bourgeois ideologists have always been obliged to reckon with it, and have never ceased their efforts to find ways of distorting Marxism-Leninism and undermining the revolution.

The current anti-Leninist theories of the "three worlds," etc., are also aimed at undermining the revolution, extinguishing the struggle against imperialism—especially against U.S. imperialism—splitting the Marxist-Leninist movement, the unity of the proletariat advocated by Marx and Lenin, and creating all kinds of groupings of anti-Marxist elements to fight the true Marxist-Leninist Parties which stand loyal to Marxism-Leninism and the revolution.

The attempts to analyze situations allegedly in a new way, differently from that of Lenin and Stalin, to change the revolutionary strategy which the Marxist-Leninist communist movement has always upheld, lead in devious anti-Marxist ways to abandoning the struggle against imperialism and revisionism.

Loyalty to Marxism-Leninism, to the revolutionary strategy of the Marxist-Leninist movement, struggle against all opportunist deviations which the modern revisionists of all hues are spreading, the revolutionary mobilization of the working class and the peoples against the bourgeoisie and imperialism, serious preparation for the revolution—these are the only correct road, the only road which can lead to victory.

## 'The Underground Committee'

**THE UNDERGROUND COMMITTEE CARRIES ON** (Moscow, 1952 - still available in places).

From the Reimentarovka Forest, the Ukraine, USSR, partisan men and women fought during WWII in the underground with the leadership of Alexi Fyodorov. His book, **The Underground Committee Carries On**, published in Moscow in 1952, tells their story. "I have decided," he writes, "to put down only what I saw with my own eyes or at least have from absolutely authentic sources." The events are written in the style of a novel, the real characters speak for themselves, and Fyodorov records each action and struggle as part of a whole, the growth of the partisan movement. The book demonstrates the need for the communist party, collective unity and absolute reliance on the peasantry for the success of the underground fight.

Fyodorov was an orphan adopted into a working class family, his step father a river pilot and ferryman. He attended a two-year high school, served in the Red Army from 1920-24, and then worked as a herder, a horse driver in the mines and for a mine-building contractor. He joined the Communist Party (Bolshevik) on June 27, 1927. He was sent to the Chernigov Region where he was elected chairman of the district trade union council. Ten years later he was elected first secretary of the Regional Committee and subsequently was asked to recommend a chairman for the underground party, which was to be left behind the Red Army. He requested that he himself be allowed to remain.

His first task was to find the men and women assigned to the underground, scattered through the various villages of the region. He sets off on foot with four comrades, traveling at night and sleeping by day in haystacks or the homes of peasants.

But no one they meet will tell them who are the members of the underground; no one peasant will inform to these "strangers." As much effort is spent in the telling of this tense, somewhat unfruitful period from July till November, 1941, as in describing the exciting scenes of close battle later on. We, reading the book, develop a deep sense of Fyodorov's persistence and confidence in the peasants and partisans—even as they unwittingly protect their identity from their own leader!

Fyodorov decides he will risk going to a town meeting, which will be headed by the German-appointed **starosta** or "Burgomeister." It is dangerous, but he knows there's greater chance he'll be recognized by friends and comrades attending. He makes contact and calls the first meeting of the underground communists. Fifty people met in a forester's shack at 11 PM. It was pouring rain, "yet many of the comrades came from 30 kilometers away. Every single one came on foot."

Following this initial meeting, camp was set up using a series of dugouts, formed in the frozen ground, after bonfires warmed the earth sufficiently for the digging.

They received most of their grain, potatoes and some meat from the peasants. Horsemeat was a staple. They brewed a drink from pine needles which prevented scurvy.

Evenings, even in the heaviest frosts, they gathered around campfires and talked. At these times, the partisans performed skits: folk tales, relived battles, or comedies depicting German generals arguing over the best way to win the war. They started a "wall" newspaper, which was posted on trees and the insides of the dugouts. The partisans used these newspapers and

leaflets to maintain a political presence in the villages.

The main responsibilities of a single partisan unit were to:

1. Deal the enemy heavy blows, 2. maintain constant contact by radio with the army and with the Soviet rear, 3. have a landing field for planes sent from our Soviet rear, 4. have groups of capable speakers who could grasp the complicated political situation of that time, explain to Soviet people the tasks facing them and keep the population well informed of the real situation at the fronts, 5. maintain a printshop and print and distribute leaflets and newspapers, 6. serve as an operational base for the party political center directing the entire underground and partisan struggle in the region, 7. serve as a model of staunchness and discipline for all the local detachments and the resistance groups in the surrounding towns.

Yet these more "military rules" tell a minor aspect of the real politics of partisan warfare: reliance on the peasantry and the absence of a "regular" standing army. Partisan detachments themselves are a unity of the party and local peasant and worker volunteers. In addition, these detachments, living in the forests, cannot survive without the supplies, information and protective security of the villagers. But because the overall politics of the CP Soviet Union at this time were to appeal to nationalism, especially to the peasants whom they regarded as vested in their self-interest, Fyodorov's book makes the point almost unconsciously that peasant-based "people's war" is the socialist aspect of WWII, though a secondary aspect. (The major aspect of the Soviet participation in WWII was the standing army, which was organized along very bourgeoisie lines and became much more bourgeoisie during the course of the war. Reading Marshal Zhukov's memories is just like reading those of any capitalist general's.)

The peasants are often said by anti-communists to have welcomed the Germans initially as "liberators" from the collective-farm type economy, or at least to have been very apolitical. The book refutes this, as is shown in the examples to follow, of peasant volunteers, high political awareness and actual sabotage of the German operations and of their own crops. Fyodorov's book shows that the CPSU was incorrect in not relying much more upon the peasantry, as the Chinese later did.

On December 2, 1941, Fyodorov's men launched their first major partisan offensive against the Germans, at dawn. Half-dressed Hitlerites in the village of Pogoreltsy tumbled out of windows and ran helter-skelter through the town. 242 partisans—those from the forest aided by reinforcements from the town—destroyed the ammunition depot, fuel dump and provision stores. The enemy lost more than a hundred killed.

Partisan casualties were 3 wounded.

During the engagement we had many helpers whom we did not know and upon whose help we had not counted. Later we became accustomed to having scores of nameless helpers fighting alongside with us in every community.

Following that first operation, worker and peasant volunteers began to arrive in the camp in the woods. Ten volunteers came the first day; 22 the second.\* And so the detachment grew to over 900 men and women that winter. By 1942 there were 3 regional committees in the area. In a letter found on a captured German lieutenant, the German reaction to the growth of the partisan movement was described:

Oh those partisans! Hasn't our glorious army wiped them out yet, you ask? My reply is that they are increasing in number all the time! And not because we are plundering. We plunder everywhere. We can't but plunder. What else does the soldier fight for?...

No, the whole trouble is that we are unable to come to terms with a single authoritative person among the people. It's the same old story... Our occupation authorities have not found a single popular Russian or a single politician the least bit known who would come over to our side. The deputies to the Soviets and the Party functionaries are either underground, in the army or else head detachments of partisans. We appeal to them, we promise them land and estates, we promise them power and wealth. But these men are politicians without property. They have been brought up to despise it; the only thing to do with them is wipe them out!... Let a few score Russians remain on reservations. Let everything happen the way it did with the Indians in America. This is the best solution to the problem.

This letter was made part of the wall newspaper as soon as it was discovered.

Fyodorov is clear as to the reasons for the partisan success. He gives concrete examples, over and over, of the need for reliance on the masses and of the heroism of 'ordinary' people:

The main prerequisite of success was political organization of the masses. The districts in which the invaders received the most telling blows were those where the Communists succeeded in maintaining their leading position, where they did not lose touch with the people but called them, rallied them to the struggle. In such districts the partisan detachments became an impressive military and political force.

He tells how a Kolkhoz woman had gone to the

---

\*"Old men, women, girls and even children of twelve and thirteen came and asked if they could 'sign up with the partisans'."



Moscow, 1929: Workers Go Off to Help  
Poor Peasants Collectivize Agriculture.

river to rinse her washing when "suddenly she heard the cries of a drowning man. She pulled him out, to discover that she had saved a German officer. He thanked her profusely. But she was terribly put out. And no sooner had the German turned his back than she hit him over the head with a rock, and pushed him back into the river, with a kick to make sure." The story became a folk tale, and no matter where it was told the story always ended the same way: the woman joined the partisans.

Traitors are not excluded from the narrative. They are described, and their motivations—the spies sent out to track down the partisans; one self-serving partisan commander—and are dealt with as they were in real life. But the handful of enemies in the ranks, though dangerous and executed for their treachery, remain a small minority among the vast, consistent supporters.

The bravest are mentioned in anecdote and almost underplayed. An old man who volunteered and didn't feel worthy to be called a fighter until he had killed 6 Nazis. The flyer whose legs had to be rebroken after being badly set and who returned to fly over 100 missions. The nurse who returned to the battlefield nine times for wounded men and was herself killed. Fyodorov's understatement of his own role in the campaigns comes from his knowledge that one or two heroes do not determine the outcome of a war. "I often regretted that we didn't have a writer in our ranks, who might have truthfully told how the most ordinary of Soviet men and women were battling in the forests, how heroism was becoming an everyday necessity for them."

His accomplishments he states as matter-of-factly as he described himself: "The unit under my command exterminated alone more than 25,000 German invaders and their accomplices. It derailed 683 trains carrying enemy troops, and tanks, planes, trucks and ordnance, 8 armoured trains and their crews also flew into

the air. The dynamiters of our unit blasted 47 railway bridges, 35,000 meters of railway bed, 26 oil bases and fuel stores."

While the campaigns are successful as the result of Fyodorov's leadership—he turns around the partisans' initial philosophy of simply 'holding out' to initiate actions like the offensive of December 2—that kind of military politics is limited. The real strength of the book lies in the ways it proves the peasants are a great potential socialist force.

Nadya Belyavskaya, 23 years old, was one of Fyodorov's companions in the search to find the partisan detachments. On the journey, Nadya got into an argument with some village people who had been ordered by the Germans to reconstruct a foot bridge blown up by Red Army units during their retreat. Nadya was urging them to sabotage all the instructions and orders of the new authorities:

Why are you building a bridge, repairing the roads? You're establishing communications between the village and the towns, facilitating transport. But that will help the Germans. Now go home this instant! Drop everything! And better still, tear up the planks you've put down. Then you'll prove you're with the Red Army, with the partisans!

The women listened to Nadya eagerly. Most of them were young and enthusiastic. As for the young team leader, he hung on her lips, every now and then putting in; "Oh, that's right, just right! that's grand!"

On the other side of the river, about a kilometer away, we could see the village of Priputki, the one we were headed for. The bridge was almost finished. If another dozen boards or so were nailed down on the piles we could have crossed right over on it.

(continued on page 40)



# BBC, TIME, WNET

## ...and the poor nazis

On December 9, 1976, the New York "public" TV station WNET ran a BBC (British) film, "Orders from Above: The Last Secret of WWII." Based on accounts by British Conservative politician N. Bethell (*The Last Secret*) and by Solzhenitsyn, who figures prominently in it, this film purports to tell how about one million Soviet citizens (figures not necessarily accurate) were forcibly repatriated by Britain and the U.S. to the U.S.S.R. at the end of WWII.

The film concentrates upon the several hundred thousand who had fought for the Nazis, led either by the Soviet traitor General Vlasov or by other adventurers. It argues that almost all of these men were "innocent" of any "real" wrongdoing, men who either had been forced to don Nazi uniforms when POWs, or who hated Stalin and communism and joined forces with Hitler while disagreeing with Naziism. The film concludes that these men should have been allowed to stay in the West as invaluable allies in the Cold War.

The show begins with groups of Russians in Nazi uniform captured in W. Europe and brought to England. It examines the political reasons for the decision by then Foreign Secretary Eden and others to send them back to the U.S.S.R., despite the fact that most would probably be tried as traitors upon their return.

The film is necessarily very self-contradictory. Lack of protest by the U.S. and British public over the forced repatriations is first set down to ignorance—they didn't know of it. Later, after the film makes it clear that the N.Y. and London press **did** report the repatriations, a new explanation is offered. The British and U.S. people were too "brainwashed" after years of pro-Soviet propaganda during the war to see Stalin "as he really was" and too callous as well— "our men are coming home, to hell with the rest." The

truth of the matter—that the British and U.S. public had little sympathy for anyone who had fought for Hitler for any reason—is never suggested.

Again, the film **assumes** that most ex-Vlasovites and Soviet POWs were reluctant, if not hostile, toward going home. Yet at one point Soviet Soldiers are shown dancing and singing on the docks while awaiting repatriation. In fact, a *Daily Herald* (London) reporter sent to investigate rumors found "no one seems reluctant to be going back to Russia" (Bethell, p. 65).

The second half of the film turns into a pro-Nazi, anti-Stalin, anti-communist orgy. It concentrates on the forced repatriation of several thousand Nazi Cossacks to the U.S.S.R. These Cossacks were guilty of numerous atrocities **by their own admission**. The film can only make one apology for them—they were fanatically anti-Soviet, and so couldn't have been **all** bad! (Of course, the same thing applies to Hitler himself!)

The narrator states "the Cossack troops had by choice collaborated with the Nazis and now were on the last leg of their escape from the Soviet Union." That's the last mention of their guilt. From then on, they are just "victims," betrayed by the British— "We believed totally in the British army. We believed in them as the saviors of Western democracy," etc.

The film's charming scenes of Cossacks at play on horseback don't mention the murders, pogroms, and strike-breaking which the Tsars had pampered them for. Hitler had just set them up again, as the "15th SS Cavalry Corps," in their traditional role. And, though many Cossacks were sent back, the British let many "escape." A large party of these are shown at a memorial reunion on the site of their old camp.



The movie is thus a pile of lies, a gross distortion even of the work by Bethell (who briefly appears in it). Though sharply anti-communist, Bethell is not able to be as cavalier with the facts as he would no doubt have liked (probably because, as a politician, he had to apologize for the wartime British government's actions in sending the Russians back). Though he uses the Cossack émigré sources almost exclusively, Bethell does point out that they are exaggerated and self-serving, trying to blame their own atrocities on "the bad influence of the SS," for example!

Solzhenitsyn is dragged into the film to sharpen up the anti-communist flavor. According to him, the Vlasov army men were "innocent," and were (1) genuine anti-communists and "democrats" (like Vlasov himself, according to S.), who wanted to "liberate" Russia from communism; (2) peasants who had suffered unjustly under Stalin and naively viewed the Nazis as "liberators" until it was too late; or (3) tormented Soviet POWs, forced to join Vlasov's army or be killed, who were brutally and pointlessly punished by the U.S.S.R. upon repatriation. We shouldn't expect the truth from the anti-semitic Tsar-worshipper Solzhenitsyn. But what is the real story?

After 1947, when every anti-communist Soviet citizen was welcomed as an ally in Western capitalist countries, the U.S. ruling class funded a special study to interrogate anti-Stalin Soviet soldiers. What they discovered was disappointing to professional anti-communists. Most of Vlasov's men who had escaped had been involved in various atrocities. Many other one-time Vlasovites had deserted back to the Soviet partisans. Of those shipped out by the Nazis to Normandy, most had fought the British and U.S. troops ferociously. The number of men who joined the Nazis simply to save their own lives was relatively small.

And this was just the Vlasov army. The other Soviet troops with the Nazis, national formations (mainly of Georgians and Turkic groups like Uzbeks and Tatars) and other deserter-traitor battalions, were enthusiastic fascists! The "Kaminsky Brigade" (RONA, or "29th SS Division") helped put down the Warsaw uprising with such brutality that "the upshot was an orgy horrifying enough to turn even the most ruthless Germans against the Special Regiment" (Dallin). The SS itself had Kaminsky shot for his uncontrollable brutality!

Unlike even the "innocent" Vlasovites, the vast majority of Soviet prisoners died or committed suicide rather than fight against the U.S.S.R. (in contrast to the Cossack murderers, who only tried suicide when threatened with return). Soviet POWs joined Italian partisan forces towards the war's end, and bitterly fought the Nazis and Italian fascists. Others escaped and fought alongside Polish, French, and Hungarian partisans, often risking recapture to help Jews escape the ovens.

The loyalty of the vast majority of Soviet prisoners, according even to Bethell, "may well

disturb those survivors of Vlasov's army and of the Cossack Corps now living abroad" (p. 205).

The USSR did punish some ex-Pow's who had surrendered out of cowardice. The 25 years of capitalist encirclement, and the spontaneous regeneration of small capitalism (especially in areas like the Ukraine where anti-Semitism was and is a major component of local nationalism) combined to cause desertion, discouragement, and treason among a few Soviet army men. This occurred mainly during the first months of the Nazi blitzkrieg. Less than 10% of the Soviet army was captured alive; of these, only one out of twenty collaborated in any way with the Nazis! These figures compare very favorably with the French army, which surrendered entirely, and with the mass surrenders of British troops in Crete and U.S. troops in the Philippines at a similar stage of the war.

It would have been a betrayal not to deal harshly and justly with the murderers and degenerates of the Vlasov band.

The main error of the Soviet leadership was, not in punishing these renegades, but in their political line. In 1941 the CPSU's base for communism in the countryside was still small. Stalin and other communist leaders simply did not trust the political loyalty to socialism of their largely peasant army and population. They hoped that appeals to nationalism, very harsh discipline for disobeying orders, hatred of Nazi atrocities, and the moderate success of the collectivization movement (popular among poor peasants, though weakened by concessions to richer peasants) would ensure that most Soviet soldiers and citizens remained loyal.

This fear, that there remained many people within the U.S.S.R. still fundamentally opposed to communism and workers' power, was accurate but misplaced. Accounts like A. Fyodorov, *The Underground Committee Carries On*, (see adjoining review) show that the peasantry could be won to socialism. The majority of the Soviet citizens hostile to socialism were to be found among middle-class and elite groups. Some of these figures were high-placed, like Vlasov and Miley Zykov, a rightist associate of Bukharin's on the *Izvestia* staff during the mid-thirties, who became the "brains" behind Vlasov's plans. Many overt traitors had been exposed and dealt with during the purges of the 'thirties. But the political weakness of failing to rely on the masses to lead the attack on rightwing elements allowed many others to remain in privileged positions, like Malenkov and Khrushchev who cloaked their hostility to socialism behind fervent nationalism.

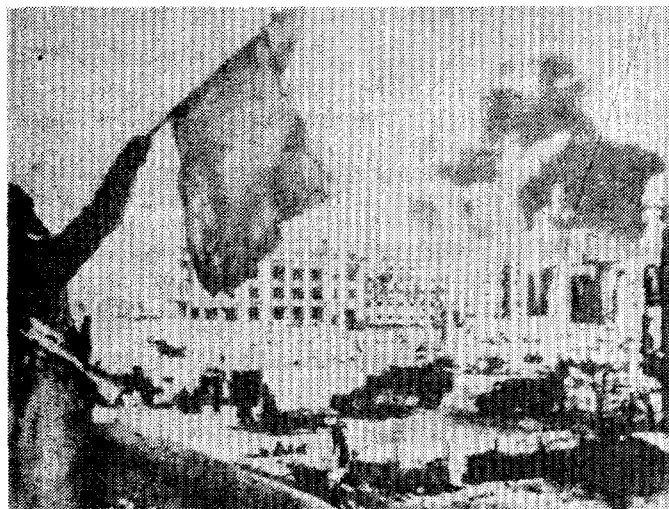
Thus the basis was laid for the isolation of the CPSU from the working-class and peasantry through an abandonment of a class line during WWII and the further post-war development of the CPSU towards becoming a privileged, new capitalist elite.

"Orders from Above" will be shown again. U.S. rights have been bought by Time-Life. It is clearly part of the ideological preparation for

(continued on page 40)

(continued from page 47)

flannel suit instead of a brown shirt and nazi armband. But does this mean that it will be less cruel, less terroristic, less genocidal, less enslaving of the entire working class? Not in the least. U.S., gray-flanneled suited fascism with good manners, saying peace when it means war and freedom when it means fascism will be as repressive and even more repressive than brown-shirted fascism. The capitalism of crisis makes this inevitable, if it is not overthrown by a communist revolution. Unless we recognize the new form of fascism in the last quarter of the twentieth century and analyze it more thoroughly, we will go on giving an unconvincing account of it; we will miss the revisionist tendencies of an anti-fascist movement that confines itself to KKKs and Nazis, as we did in publishing last year the two-piece article on the history of fascism in the 1930s; and our friends will go on believing that some of the moves of the U.S. ruling class are signs that it has a New Deal option open to it.



Red Flag over Stalingrad, 1943

(continued from page 39)

fascism. In defending troops who fought for the Nazis, especially the most brutal of them, the SS Cossacks, the film's producers are defending the Nazis themselves. As in the U.S., the British bosses are trying to make fascism look good against the day when they will adopt similar measures here. One of the last quotations of the show is from fascist-lover Solzhenitsyn, about British "national guilt" for repatriating the Vlasovites. Nothing about the Nazis' guilt! Anti-communism justifies everything.

"Public" television is funded by the Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations, Exxon,

Xerox, Mobil, etc. These "educational" channels are increasingly pushing pro-fascist, anti-worker poison. They, and films like "Orders from Above" must be exposed and fought.

(A short bibliography, besides Bethell: G. Fischer, **Soviet Opposition to Stalin**, Harvard, 1952; Alexander Dallin, "The Kaminsky Brigade." in A. and J. Rabinowitch, editors, **Revolution and Politics in Russia**, Indiana Univ. Press, 1972; "Solzhenitsyn Slanders the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," **PL**, Vol. 9, No. 5).

(continued from page 37)

I tugged Nayda's sleeve on the sly and gave her a look intended to mean: "Nice words, those, but we have to get to the other side. Come to your senses!" But she went on.

The fellow set the ball rolling. He ran up to the bridge with his axe, quickly ripped off one board and then another and kicked them into the water.

"Now, girls, all together! The devil with it! We'll all answer for it!"

The girls did not need to be coaxed. With shouts and jokes and laughter they took the whole bridge apart in half an hour. But this did not satisfy the young man. He ordered his team to fling all the building material that lay on the bank right into the river.

I took Nadya aside.

"Now, my dear, what in the world have you done!"...

"But Alexei Fyodorovich, if we ask the peasants to make sacrifices we should set them an example."

Well, of course, that was logical enough. But I would have preferred it, if Nayda had begun her propaganda on the other bank... The river was dreadfully cold. We got wet to the waist fording it.

The story of the partisans' reliance on the peasantry and the actions of Fyodorov's unit is recommended reading because there is inspiration that we 'ordinary' men and women can accomplish the same. Our party's work would be enriched by learning from this portrayal of the socialist aspect of Russia's experience in WWII, but which due to the political weaknesses of the CPSU, was the aspect most rapidly in decline.

Editor's Note:

In the last issue of PL (Vol. 10, No. 6) three articles on Imperialism appeared which made references to D-D. We apologize to our readers for leaving out the footnote which explained that the three articles originally appeared in the PLP Internal Party Bulletin in refutation of a right-wing position that was advanced by two former Party leaders (D-D).

• • •

The following article is a discussion paper that was submitted to a P.L.P. conference on political-economic questions which was held on the weekend of June 11-12. The conference focused on three questions: The crisis confronting U.S. imperialism and the growing dangers of war and fascism; The "allies" of U.S. imperialism and the contradictions between them; Soviet Imperialism—How does it work?

In future issues of PL magazine, additional discussion papers and articles coming out of this conference will be printed. We welcome the critical comments of all friends.

## **CAPITALISM—**

# **Cradle-to-Grave Insecurity**

One of the problems on the agenda of this Progressive Labor Party Conference is: What is the character of the present economic and political crisis of capitalism and what choices are open to capitalism, particularly west European and U.S. capitalism, for dealing with the crisis. Do present international circumstances allow the capitalist powers, east and west, to avoid a world war? And do present circumstances allow U.S. capitalism to opt for a liberal (another "New Deal") economic and political strategy to cope with its current contradictions?

The first question is: why is the problem being raised?

The Party line on the international situation, is that the primary conflict of the 1970s and for the next historical period is the rivalry among the capitalist classes of the world, but especially the imperialist competition between the U.S. and the USSR. As a consequence of this competition and the nature of capitalist crisis here at home, capitalism is rushing headlong toward war and fascism. Is the purpose of this conference to debate the pros and cons of that line? My answer is no. I take the line to be a right evaluation of the contemporary world. If the conference devotes itself to a pro and con discussion, my feeling is that it would contribute very little to PLP theory or practice.

I don't mean by this that the pros and cons are to be neglected or that disagreements with the line are to be excluded. The problem is being raised precisely because disagreements exist outside and inside the Party. The San Francisco defectors argue against the line of crisis, war, and fascism. Their practice matches this theory: united front from above with liberals and social democrats. As defectors organizing wherever they can against the party and for their line they are enemies of the Party. But friends also question the line: capitalism has more options than the Party allows for; war and fascism are not inevitable teammates; either one might occur without the other or neither might occur because one of the options is a New Deal strategy. Some friends even question the central place of racism in crisis, war, and fascism. What about Party members? Here too disagreements are found. Party loyalty may hide the disagreements. But practice or lack of practice in bringing the Party's politics to the base exposes what loyalty may hide.

In fact, as I understand it, the disagreements among these three groups—enemies, friends, and members—are the reasons why this conference raises the problem of the options open to capitalism in this period of international crisis. Our purpose is to figure out what difficulties people are having with accepting the line; what gaps exist in our explanations of the line; what research needs to be done to strengthen the theory; what oversimplifications of ours need to be dealt with and so on. The Party has offered argument after argument based on up-to-date evidence proving that capitalism has entered another, more intensive period of crisis, which forecloses on the strategies formerly available to it. The Party also argues and has produced a considerable amount of very suggestive evidence that the crisis is permanent. The question for us to ask then is not what is the nature, scope, and intensity of the crisis but what is the nature of the capitalism of crisis.

One of the key factors in the crisis the Party has argued is the falling rate of profit. We often point to the oil industry as the primary evidence for this. The Party is not the only one concerned with the profitability of capitalism. Bourgeois economists are also concerned. William Nordhaus, of the Council of Economic Advisors, has argued since 1973 that capitalist profitability is in a long-term, basic decline. He is not arguing that the amount of profit has declined, but that the rate has deteriorated since the end of World War II. He measures the return on corporate capital since the end of World War II. He measures the return on corporate capital against the Gross National Product. In 1948, corporate profit represented 13% of the GNP. By 1973, it had fallen to under 9% of the GNP. Another way of putting it is that from 1948 to 1973, the GNP increased by 250% (adjusted for inflation), while profits increased by less than 80%. Nordhaus found

a falling trend in the rate when profits were measured against invested capital.

Martin Feldstein of Harvard disagrees. He measures profit against capital invested. Interestingly, his graphing doesn't differ all that much from Nordhaus. But through averaging and econometric manipulations, some of which are questioned by a number of leading bourgeois economists, he comes up with an average return (adjusting for inflation and the business cycle) of 11% for the years 1948-76.

The main disagreement between the two is not so much have rates fallen particularly since the mid sixties, but why they have. Nordhaus, as we have said, considers the decline an historical trend basic to the investment functioning of capitalism, regardless of the ups and downs of the business cycle. Feldstein, on the other hand, holds that the decline is temporary and is due simply to the ups and downs of the business cycle.

The debate is not academic: 'If' Nordhaus is right,\* i.e. if the ruling class decides that Nordhaus is right, then major tax relief for the capitalists is justified. If Feldstein is right, then it is not. There is an interesting dialectic here. Nordhaus's position, at least as far as a fundamental falling rate of profit goes, is closer to our own but the policy that follows from it, more direct privileges to big business, seems to be totally pro-business. Feldstein's position, which paints a rosier picture of capitalism, suggests a policy of not giving more direct privileges to business, in other words a more liberal policy.

Three things: first, is the Nordhaus point of view merely a ploy to rip off the masses by giving a still bigger tax break to the capitalists? I take the right answer to be that while it is a ripoff, it is not a ploy. Regardless of what the differences are between the Nordhaus or Feldstein position, it is clear that capitalism is in long trend trouble. The figures demonstrate, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the capitalists have to produce more and more and provide more and more services at a faster rate than their profits increase. In a certain sense it is classic. As the rate falls, more must be produced and provided simply to maintain the same level of absolute profit. The merry-go-round is traveling faster than the capitalists who are walking on its surface. And the faster the capitalists walk, the faster the merry-go-round accelerates.

Second, the strange dialectic is not so strange. In the 1930s government intervention, usually advertised as in favor of the people but always on the side of big business, meant liberalism, New Deal. Laissez-faire meant reaction. But then a

\* (Editor's note: The author does not mean to call into question the fundamental Marxist principle of the falling rate of profit, but to explain the debate among bourgeois economists who are faced with this falling rate of profit, and must try to design some scheme to eliminate it. This is beyond their power. For the communist sense, neither bourgeois economist is really "right." Therefore, we put in the quotation marks.)

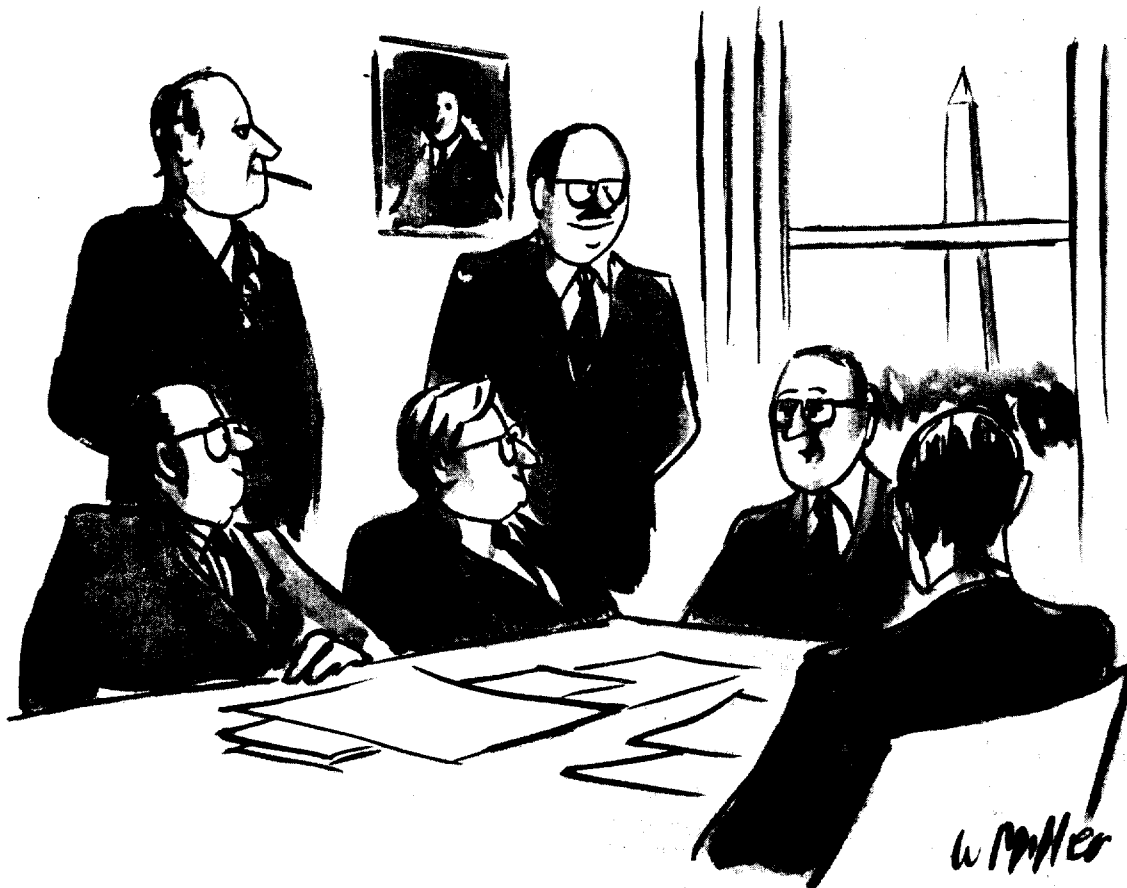
big part of the capitalist problem was to increase buying power to stimulate production. Today the problem is to lower wages, to find labor-intensive areas and industries to invest in, to increase productivity, and to minimize the increasing ratio of dead capital to wage capital.

Third: to fully explain why this period requires these solutions (for the capitalists), we shall have to consider the falling rate of profit not only from a classical point of view, i.e. as a ratio of constant capital to variable capital in a given industry or industries, but as a ratio of all of the things mentioned in the last sentence of the last paragraph to production as a whole, the availability of labor-intensive production as a whole, and so on.

Here is one example of the need to view the problem more holistically. Bourgeois economists consider the present resurgence of the economy, the strength of which they have doubts about, mainly the result of a boost in consumer spending. Consumer credit has risen phenomenally since November 1976. But it appears now, from studies done at University of Michigan, that the zip is going out of consumer outlays. Consumer debt is too high, and consumer savings have dwindled.

Furthermore consumer confidence in continued economic expansion is down. At about the same time these figures appeared, McGraw-Hill reported that U.S. corporations planned to spend \$141.6 billion for new plants and equipment. **The Wall Street Journal** considered all this to be a healthy situation. The reduction in consumer spending would allow a re-entry of capital on a less inflationary basis into financing the investment in new plants and equipment. **The Wall Street Journal** cited businessmen and economists who thought that the recovery would continue but now under the impetus of capital spending rather than consumer spending. But almost at the same time these projections appeared, the report on GNP for the first quarter of 1977 came out, as well as the rate of profit as a ratio of earnings to GNP. And low and behold, in spite of increased business activity (an upturn in the cycle), the rate of profit fell. GNP went up by 6.4% and profits by 0.9%. As a consequence, it is not at all sure that big business will indeed up its capital spending as much as it had intended. The merry-go-round goes round, and capitalist predictions get dizzier and dizzier.

If we look at one aspect of the problem, we too



*"O.K., then, it's settled. We present it to the public with all its pros and cons, we let the media chew on it for a while, we go through a lot of soul-searching, and then we go ahead and do it."*

will get dizzy and may suddenly interpret a given capitalist policy as a New Deal trend. For example, Carter's plan to create jobs and/or a direct tax rebate to consumers. But how can capitalism create jobs when it cannot increase capital investment? How can it give a tax rebate, when the capital is needed to finance capital investment? But how can business go in for capital investment when its rate of profit is falling? But how can it not retool and expand its plant facilities when Japan is breathing down its neck with over 8 million cars in production this last year? But how can it increase capital investment and compete with Japan or Germany, which in different degrees are labor-intensive countries?

Here we come to the crux of the problem. At one and the same time, the U.S. bosses have to renew the technological base of its economy and find pools of cheap labor to exploit. Unless it can do these two on an enormous scale, particularly the latter, its profit vis-a-vis constant capital and GNP will continue to fall. In the last Internal Bulletin, I made the point that western imperialism has less of the world to exploit than it did prior to the Oct. 1917 Revolution. Furthermore, the part of the world it does exploit is now more imperialized than before. More imperialized means that industrial developments have increased in these areas with a corresponding decrease in labor intensive pools. This is a matter of degree. These areas are for the most part still cheap labor resources. But they are somewhat less so than before. The main areas of U.S. imperialism have been Europe and South America. For reasons of the growth of national capitalist classes in Europe, it has become a poor source for the United States for cheap labor. The cheap labor of Europe is primarily exploited by French and German capitalism. Still a large source is South America. But here too, as in Brazil and Argentina, development has been faster than in Africa and Asia, which are minor areas of U.S. imperialism compared to what they have invested in Europe and South America.

What about the pool of cheap labor at home? Racism has always provided an abundant pool. It has served to depress the wages of the entire working class and it has provided an enormous pool of minority workers at maximum reduced wages. But several items of the recent past show this to be less true or quickly disappearing. Item 1: The garment industry, which only 25 years ago relied for its high rate of profit on the importation of Puerto Rican labor, for its high production at low unit cost on the racist employment of Puerto Ricans, is now engaged in retooling so that the industry's unit cost will be lowered and made competitive with Hong Kong etc. It cannot compete without lowering the unit cost, but it cannot lower the unit cost any longer by importing Puerto Ricans or running away to the south.

Item 2: It appears now that the exodus of the black population from the rural south has slowed considerably. The reason is not that blacks are sticking to farming more and more. There is a

steady, in fact for some an alarming drop in farm ownership among blacks. But blacks are staying in the rural areas more and more because industry is developing the rural areas more and more. The reason is to get close to the source of cheap labor. Not too long ago the exodus of blacks from the South to the North was slowed by the growth of industry in the major urban areas of the south. Now the movement to the urban areas in the south has slowed. All this indicates that source after source of cheap labor keeps becoming less and less available. How long will it be before the super cheap labor of the rural south becomes less available? Ten, fifteen, twenty years. Think that the garment industry used up its source of super cheap labor in 25 years. There is still plenty of cheap labor in the United States, but as industry expands, its contradiction is that it converts cheap labor into expensive labor, and increases the amount of constant capital vis-a-vis wage capital.

"Cheap Mexican Labor Attracts U.S. Companies to the Border" a recent NY Times headline reads. The quest for cheap labor carries capitalism everywhere. But so far on the Mexican border, the main industries are the food processing industries, shrimp packing and so on. These businesses are extracting racist profits out of the Mexican population. But all statistics show that there is not a dense enough population there to provide a sufficient pool of cheap labor for the major industries of the U.S.

To be sure domestic pools of cheap labor, as a consequence of retarded sectional industrial development, still exist in the United States, but they are no longer major pools. Since these pools are smaller and since the retarded sectional areas are subjected to full scale technological plant operation once industrial development is begun, they dry up at a faster rate than the earlier, larger pools in the Northeast and the midwest. In the past these pools were fed by immigration (Irish, Jewish, Polish, Italian). But this source, i.e. the European is no longer available to U.S. capitalism. Since World War II, Puerto Rican, Mexican, and Caribbean (Dominicans and Haitians) immigration fed the pool. But as we have seen, the move toward mechanizing the garment industry indicates that this labor, while still miserably underpaid, is no longer maximally cheap or cheap at the levels that the textile and garment capitalists can compete with overseas capitalists. Furthermore, the number of undocumented workers involved in the post World War II immigration poses a contradiction to U.S. capitalism. On the one hand, the illegality of their immigration allows the authorities (government) to use racist harassment and the bosses to use the threat of harassment to keep wages down. But on the other hand, the instability of the work force as a result of its undocumented status means a less reliable, less productive pool. All these things taken together suggest that in addition to an energy crisis because new pools of energy (oil) cannot be profitably extracted

through the use of capital reserves, so a cheap labor pool crisis exists for U.S. capitalism. All this needs to be explored with a great deal of thoroughness.

Another matter that needs to be explored is the extent to which racism allows the capitalists to depress wages at least of a significant section of labor to the point where it is cheap enough to reverse or slow down the falling rate of profit, where it is cheap enough to cause a lowering of unit cost, whether sophisticated machinery is used or not. The capitalists have used racism throughout their history to do precisely these things. They have used it and still do to depress the wages of the entire working class below the normal standards of exploitation, i.e. if capitalism had worked in a classic way (which it never did or could). They have used it to super-super exploit minorities. But there is evidence to suggest that while racism still has these effects, U.S. labor gets less and less cheap, whether in the white skin or the black. If this is so then racism serves the capitalists as reform serves the working class. At best it decelerates the crisis but it cannot bring it to a standstill, let alone make headway against it.

Does this mean that the capitalists will be less likely to use racism in the future? Not at all. In fact it means that out of increasing desperation at the irreversibility of the crisis no matter what they do, they will use more and more of it to simply decelerate the deterioration in order in the first place to work out a political solution.

In this sense we may understand some recent policy moves on the part of the Carter administration. The Carter administration recently unveiled the idea of granting legal status to all undocumented persons who came here by a certain date. What does this mean? Is the capitalist class through Carter embarking on a new round of bourgeois liberalism (New Dealism)? Some people interpret this move in exactly that way. On the other hand it is simply a trick, let us say to defuse our own demand for legal status for all undocumented immigrants? We need to examine if these two ways are not over-simplifications, the first an underestimation of the capitalist crisis, the second a failure to see the capitalism of crisis. It is a move through political means to establish one pool of maximally cheap labor on a more stable and productive basis. But as we have said at best it is only a minor pool.

Soon after this political feeler, the Carter administration opened a full scale campaign to alter its foreign policy of the last twenty-five years. Andrew Young and Vice-President Mondale are all over Africa. Young, in spite of criticism for being too militant and speaking out of turn on foreign affairs, speaks out in an even louder voice, saying that the U.S. policy of the last twenty-five years in Africa was a mistake, i.e. its all out support for the racist governments of South Africa and Rhodesia. Right in the heart of the South African racist government he calls for a boycott, surely unconventional diplomacy. Mondale, visit-

ing the heads of government of Rhodesia, tells them that they are going to have to accept integrated rule where blacks are in the majority in the government. At the same time, Carter makes a speech saying that the foreign policy of the last quarter century based on the cooperation of western capitalism is no longer sensible. The new foreign policy will have to be based on worldwide cooperation and emphasize the underdeveloped nations. What does all this mean? A New Deal good neighbor policy? A new round of bourgeois liberalism? A fake? I propose not liberalism or a fake, but a policy to open up large pools of maximally cheap labor for U.S. capitalism to exploit.

Some may ask but doesn't the out and out racism of Vorster and Ian Smith guarantee those large pools more effectively? Maybe in the short run. But the United States learned a lesson from its defeat in Vietnam. And what is to follow underscores why Vietnam was a defeat even if the revisionists made an accommodation to U.S. capitalism. Such governments can no longer last very long. What may seem like a big bonanza for a while soon ceases to be one at all and may well fall into the orbit of Soviet capitalism, which increases U.S. capitalist woes no end. In the world the way it is now constituted that cheap labor pool can only be guaranteed by political groupings drawn from the majority population. This is the lesson U.S. capitalism learned from Vietnam and other recent world wide experiences.

Of course to make these new policies credible in the face of the need for a greatly intensified racism to decelerate the deterioration of the capitalist position, the capitalists need a liberal appearing ideology. The analysis of *Roots* in *Challenge-Desafio*, April 7, 1977 (Volume 13, No. 45), Editorial, and elsewhere in this issue of PL, explains how it works with regard to African policy.



"WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, BENSON? DIDN'T YOU READ MY 'THINK SAFE', 'BE SAFE', 'WORK SAFE' MEMO?"



But pools of maximally cheap labor overseas (Africa is the major source, Asia not so because China, India, and Vietnam are closed for this purpose) does not solve the problem at home. No matter what capital investment is overseas, no matter what pools of labor U.S. capitalism exploits through imperialism, the major base of capitalist profit is here at home. If the hitherto normal ways of solving the problem of cheap pools of labor and of financing constant capital investment (through the reserves of the capitalists themselves) are only minimally available and, as signs indicate, only available for a few more years (10 to 20) then what are the capitalists to do?

Well, one thing they have done is to create a large pool of unemployed, permanently unemployed. This serves to oppress wages. But it also creates political resistance and intensifies class struggle, creating a potential for revolution at the most advanced level or just plain instability (strikes, crime, terrorism, anarchy, drug addiction, etc.) at a minimum.

Recent figures show that U.S. capitalism has also created a permanent pool of part-time workers in the last ten years. In 1963 part-time workers represented about 10.5% of the U.S. work force. Today they represent over 15%. In absolute numbers, the change has gone from a little over 7 million part-timers to over 15 million. We are talking about a substantial force in other words. Moreover it is a force that truly represents maximally cheap labor. They get basically minimum wages, \$2.35 or \$2.40, they get paid only for the hours absolutely needed, they get no fringe benefits, they have no job protection whatsoever, no union.

Furthermore, the capitalists are delighted with them because they are a totally loyal force. They don't complain. They don't fight back. They are only too happy to have the work they have. Of course what is loyalty to the capitalist is actually fear based on no organization and only minimal means to organize because of the way their work day and labor force are organized on the job. This is a labor force we have done little to investigate to see what effect it has on the rate of profit for capitalism as a whole. The capitalists who employ this force (J.L. Hudson 65% of its workers; Howard Johnson, 50%; Gimbel Bros. 40%) say with part-time labor their businesses are very profitable. Nor have we explored the extent to which this is racist and sexist employment. Most of the part-timers are young, black and women.

The size of permanent part-time labor will undoubtedly grow even larger than it now is. **But is this the key to the maximally cheap labor problem?** So far it does not appear that auto, steel, aircraft, rubber or any of the other major heavy industries are able to organize their production around part-time work. So far most of the part-time work is concentrated in the service of the economy. Moreover some economists report that the long term trend in the service industries shows productivity decreasing for more than ten years, while the trend in manufacturing and

mining shows for the same years only a very slight deterioration. The solution for manufacturing and mining doesn't seem at this point to lie in the direction of permanent part-time labor.

**How can the capitalists solve the twin problem of increasing investment in plant and machinery without further damaging the rate of profit and of having available a substantial pool of long term cheap labor?** Let me pose this hypothesis. If the normal ways of overcoming these problems are no longer open to it, and I mean not only in the next period but no longer available at all, then may we say that the capitalism of this crisis takes on certain characteristics of capitalism in its formative years (I don't want to press this comparison too hard). I mean in two respects, to solve its cheap labor problem, it needs once more a round of slave labor, and to solve its need for renewing and expanding its technological base, it needs once more a round of direct money accumulation such as the primitive accumulation of the formative years. But what does this mean under twentieth century conditions? It means fascism or to put it another way the shift in the operation of bourgeois dictatorship from its bourgeois democratic forms to its bourgeois total repression forms (the directoireship and Napoleon after the French Revolution, Napoleon Bonaparte after 1851, Hitler after 1930, and the various petty and not so petty fascisms all along).

But then what are we to make of such political developments as Carter proposing an anti-wire-tapping bill? Or to the several studies that have appeared in recent weeks, one of them sponsored by the government and the other by leading medical academics, that reverse racism is a deception, that minority admissions to medical schools is lagging and that in New York City is now lower in percentage than it was six or seven years ago? Are these signs of a New Deal trend in civil rights and civil liberties? Or if they are not New Deal signs, then are they mere fakery? Again I think the answer is no to both. In the *Roots* analysis in C/D, we discussed how the logistics of a totally repressed labor force and of a money ripoff of vast dimensions for capital investment necessitated not only intensified racism but also liberal ideology and practice for large sections of the minority population. Liberalism under such logistic circumstances is not to be misinterpreted as a New Deal option but as a required practice to achieve fascism. This applies to the growing attacks suddenly against reverse racism and the call for a renewed effort to implement affirmative action. On the face of it it may seem like New Dealism, but it is at one and the same time the mask that hides the fascist intent and the practice that supplies a fascist middle management and reliable bureaucracy (and given the size of the U.S. capitalist operation, these will amount to millions of people, a considerable portion of which will necessarily have to be minority).

I believe that one of the major reasons friends and members are not clear on these questions, why friends see liberal options in economics and

politics that late twentieth century conditions indicate are used up, why members are forced to resort to the weak and unconvincing argument that these moves are fakes, is that liberalism is a requirement of the capitalist crisis. I think another major reason our line on the present state of world affairs is not convincing is that we are very unimaginative on what late twentieth-century will look like, particularly in the United States. Our views on this score are old-fashioned and mechanical. We naively assume fascism will wear a brown shirt, a nazi arm-band and goose-step into power. Party members look for the KKK, the U.S. Nazi Party, ROAR, and so on to confirm the drive to fascism. An example of this kind of mechanical thinking is to be found in a C/D letter, May 26. The letter ways that the liberals are running interference for the fascists, using as evidence the ACLU defense of the KKK and the Nazis.

While it is imperative to expose the garbage of such groups as ROAR, KKK, and the U.S. Nazis, it is wrong to propose that these groups are the main sign or the spearhead of U.S. fascism, the clear implication of putting it the way the letter does. The letter is only symptomatic. My impression is that we emphasize these groups in C/D to the point where our readership must come away with the notion that the threat of fascism is mainly centered in these groups. Even where we explain more fully that the ruling class opts for fascism, the distinct impression is left that what they opt for are these groups, in other words fascism in uniform with a nazi armband. This is to believe that history repeats itself exactly as before.

I think that the more accurate view is that the KKK, U.S. Nazi Party, ROAR are running interference for the liberal bourgeoisie (i.e. the big bourgeoisie who have been regarded as more liberal than other less dominant sections of capitalism). I propose that these groups serve the big bourgeoisie in two ways: first, they do indeed infect large sections of the population with fascist ideas and racism; and second they distract the working class and other anti-fascist from the real fascist leaders and practices. If we don't make this clear two problems result. It inevitably leads us to concentrate our energies against the wrong groups. It allows our base to interpret certain bourgeois policies as a move toward New Dealism.

The policies I have in mind are such things as the anti-wiretapping bill mentioned earlier, the Watergate-Nixon expose, the removal of Major-General Singlaub by Carter because he disagrees with the Korean troop removal plan, and so on. If U.S. capitalism is indeed heading toward fascism, why these moves? I think they signal that the U.S. ruling class has no intention of allowing such fascist groups to become the executors of U.S. fascism.

The history of fascism has taught the bourgeoisie some lessons. I think the U.S. ruling class has learned those lessons well. The fascist form of the bourgeois dictatorship, history shows, con-

tains many risky contradictions. I am not here talking about the fact that it forces the question of communism or capitalism. It certainly does that. I am talking about an ingrained irrationality that it fosters and needs to use that if uncontrolled becomes a weapon against the very needs of capitalism which fascism is intended to solve. For example, when the German ruling class in 1944 needed every piece of railroad rolling stock to transport its war machine effectively, Hitler used the bulk of the rolling stock to effect his final solution. Here the racism of fascism clearly got so out of hand that ultimately it led to a far greater destruction of German capitalist technology than the German ruling class felt it needed sustain.

One important aspect of Watergate-Nixon may be seen in the same way. The newspapers reported the other day that Rockefeller and Kissinger had a great chuckle over Nixon's report on his 1976 visit to China. To them it confirmed that Nixon was an egomaniac. To be sure the fundamental character of Watergate-Nixon was an intense internal battle between two different sections of the capitalist class. But the Wall Street capitalists had defeated the upstarts from the sunbelt and the West coast months before. Nixon was forced to resign. In fact Wall Street showed no desire to take such an extreme step, particularly since it had gotten clearer and clearer that Nixon was politically dead and no longer an influence, even if president, in making U.S. policy. But Nixon allowed his illusions of grandeur, his personal greed and ambitions to go beyond the internal conflict and in the most flagrant way began to discredit the system he was supposed to serve. Even the defeated upstarts, who used Nixon as their political leader, abandoned him, first one by one and then in droves, when his irrationality became counterproductive. The ruling class was not going to allow such a display of egomania to wag the capitalist tail.

It would be a mistake to think that the lesson the ruling class has learned from the history of fascism is to abandon fascism as a solution. They can't because the capitalism of crisis requires it. What it has learned is that it has to be administered in cold-blood not hot passion, by forces and groups who are in control of themselves, who subordinate themselves to the needs of capitalism, rather than groups who are controlled by and subordinated to their obsessions and fanaticisms. It cannot, if this is the case, allow anyone who wants to to arbitrarily wiretap, do illegal actions on his own, etc. and this means presidents or J. Edgar Hoovers. It is even possible if some fascist groups get out of hand, that the ruling class may curb them. But if they do, this will not mean that they have ruled out fascism. It means that the operation of these groups threatens to prevent them from having complete control over the administration of fascism.

U.S. fascism may very well dispense with the trappings of past fascism. It can come in a gray-

(continued page 40)

# ON

# NATIONALISM

*a dramatic essay*

by D.A. Jones

## Part I

(In presenting this material, I will use a fictionalized format to present factual information. I have found that often very complex material can be made accessible to more of our members if we use literary techniques as a way of communicating communist ideas. All the data to be presented can be validated and should be by further research and footnoting. I have tried to use concepts from PLP's own writings and from a research paper on this topic, plus my own insights. This is not the final statement on this issue and I encourage other comrades to debate, amplify and enrich these modest beginnings.)

Scene: A classroom. Circle Campus. University of Illinois. Some 150 students of all "races." Waiting for the lecture to begin. Bored or tense, a few trying to keep awake after hours on the assembly line. Trying to get an education. The professor enters. Wearing a dashiki. Bald, brown-skinned with moustache and goatee. Wearing a CAR button. Short and stocky with repressed energy like a Methodist preacher.

"Hit the lights. Is the multimedia projector ready?"

"Yeah, Professor Smolny."

"Okay, let's begin. Background: There is a question whether or not black nationalism is being revived. I say being revived because technically speaking black nationalism died in March of 1972 at the Gary Black Assembly meeting."

(Images of the black delegates flash on the screen. The big wheels. Jesse Jackson. Diggs. Imamu Baraka. Close up of Bobby Seale gesturing furiously. Crowds of black people, protected by white cops, flow in and out. Jesse Jackson appears again at the podium, his face tense with inner pressures, shouting, **What time is it?** And the response from the crowd, **It's nation building time.** Fade out.)

"Despite the heavy black rhetoric of the assembly meeting, it basically turned out to be a prelude for a deal with the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, headed up at this time by George McGovern. The essential anti-working class aspect of this movement was the exclusion of many black workers from the group because of the \$25 admission fee. The black caucus of the UAW did manage to get in but was expelled as a 'honky' controlled outfit when it protested against the rail-roading of the black agenda."



### PLP/CAR March for Jobs and Revolution Washington, D. C. Oct. 1.

(A hand shoots up from the middle row. White sister, with furrowed brow, puzzled. **What's the black agenda?**)

Professor Smolny responds, "The black agenda was the clearest statement of the black intellectuals in the black nationalist movement... that is, the clearest statement of what they believed...." He pauses as if searching for the right words. "It was a manifesto of economic and political demands which the black liberal establishment, led by a group called the Institute of the Black World, felt... believed... asserted, yes, that's the word I'm looking for, asserted that this was to be the Magna Carta of black liberation."

(A hand shoots up from the back of the room. **What's the Magna Carta?** Smolny frowns. He feels himself being trapped in a series of definitions that are getting in the way of the main point. He's suddenly torn with the age-old conflict of either explaining everything or just sticking to the lecture.)

He shrugs his shoulders and says, "It's, like, the declaration of demands that the English barons laid on a dude by the name of King John back in the 13th Century. It's like a symbol, see, of any major demands, very historically important demands, that one section of a powerful elite lays on another section, something like that. So anyway, this black agenda was such a list of demands."

(But what were some of the demands, asks the student still puzzled.)

"I don't remember the exact details of the demands, but they had to do with the following principles. Economic support for black businesses, community-based corporations, and co-operatives. Political control of the black communities. And also a certain percentage of blacks being appointed to all federal government posts and to all the major institutions in the country, top and bottom. These appointees were to be nominated or checked out by the Executive Committee of the Black Assembly. In other words, the

Black Assembly wanted to use the black agenda as a platform to become the negotiators between the Democratic Party elite and the black masses. They wanted to use it as their trickbag for becoming power brokers in dealing with the bourgeoisie. To put it bluntly, the black agenda was the outline of demands, developed by the black intelligentsia and their black petty bourgeois backers. It was their knife for cutting out a slice of the capitalist cake."

(The student nods in understanding. Then she asks, **Did they ever get these demands fulfilled?**)

Smolny smiles, in a sarcastic way, "Yeah, they got them fulfilled for the black upper class. But we've got to understand that the black agenda didn't have that much to do for the black working class, for members of the black rank-and-file, even for the average person in the black middle class. At any rate, what I'm trying to say is that with all of that talk about nation-building time, black power, black politics—power broker opportunists who controlled the black assembly, led by Richard Hatcher, ended up going down to the Democratic Convention in Miami Beach to sell out to that liberal punk, Oink McGovern. The whole situation turned out to be a microcosmic symbol of black nationalism."

(A hand shoots up, **Microcosmic?**)

"Yeah, a symbol in miniature of universal truths or general political principles. Like, for example, you and your brothers and sisters arguing with each other at home can symbolize the larger issue of political relationships which go on in the society as a whole."

(The student nods his head in agreement. **Yeah, I can dig where you coming from.**)

"Okay, the activities of the leadership of the Black Assembly in Miami was a microcosmic symbol of the whole betrayal and treachery that are involved in bourgeois-oriented nationalist movements. They always served the interests of the upper class. But the lower class—workers and peasants—have to be involved, since the bourgeoisie needs a mass struggle against its internal and external enemies so as to... (He pauses) So as to... See you need to understand that nationalism, the idea of bringing diverse people together in a unified group within a nation, was once a revolutionary and progressive idea. Hit the slide projector!"

(Image of a map of Europe, looking like a patch-work quilt.)

"Before nations were invented by the bourgeoisie, people were organized into kingdoms, some large, some small. The peasant work force did not belong to the kingdom. They belonged to the lords, nobles, who controlled the society of the time, and had no rights! Next slide, please."

(Image of a diagram: Nobles and church officials on top, the king and queen directly below, then a group labelled as free tradesmen, then a larger group, labelled peasants.)

"This was called **feudalism** and this economic system depended politically on the existence of kingdoms. Kingdoms were manageable units of

control which allowed the nobility to control the serfs and tradesmen, on the one hand, and the 'king' on the other. In those days, kings (or 'quëens') were simply the chairpersons of the nobility. Indeed, he or she was simply the strongest or the most convenient noble put in charge to help maintain actual and symbolic order. By the 17th Century, feudalism and its kingdom idea had become completely reactionary and was a fetter on the means of production and therefore they had to go. Next slide."

(Two pictures of the British Isles in a before and after shot. Before: the British Isles in 1300, divided into the kingdoms of England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland. After: the British Isles in 1800—one country, Great Britain.)

(Hey, Prof. Smolny. What's this gotta do with black nationalism? a voice sounds out of the darkness.)

Smolny furrowed his brow, "I'm trying to show that black nationalism ain't nothin but a microcosmic symbol of the general political principle of nationalism and if we can understand the general principle, we can dig the microcosmic symbol. Okay?"

(Yeah, I suppose so but what is the point?)

"Next slide."

(Images of a war, men armed with cannons and muskets fighting knights in armor armed with swords.)

"The rule of the feudal lords was holding down a new class of people which was coming to power. Remember the picture of the tradesmen who were in the middle class between the nobles and the serfs? Well, they had developed a new economic system, **capitalism**! It was a new means of producing wealth. The nobles tried to stop this new movement with restrictions and harassment, mainly in the form of taxes and other rip-off methods. So, it was necessary for these tradesmen, who were centered in cities (called in French *bourgs*) to wage a battle against the nobility, but how? Can we have the next slide?"

(Picture of Jean Calvin, Martin Luther, Henry VIII: they stare out of the screen, heavysset white men. Calvin and Luther are beardless, Henry heavily bearded in a thick coat of beaver, a heavy-wrought gold chain around his neck. Nationalistic symbols of a power that was to transform history.)

Smolny says, "Tough looking bunch of dudes! Each one is a symbol of how the bourgeoisie was to use nationalism mixed with religion to fight the nobles. But how to describe it is too goddam complex. Hit movie projector two."

(The images whirr out: Encyclopaedia Britannica films present Protestantism and the Rise of European Nationalism. Smolny thinks to himself. How to explain that the Protestant reformation was the dramatic form of nationalism, mixing together God and the bourgeoisie, to create theocracies and religious theories about the divine nature, Nation State, all reflecting the growing power of the bourgeoisie? How to show that when Martin Luther translated the Bible into German and used peasant folk music for hymns, he was expressing the new nationalism? Jean Calvin in Switzerland

and France was doing the same thing. How to explain that cities were the seedbed of nationalism? The cohesive city-states of London, Antwerp, Geneva, Paris, Rotterdam, Lisbon, Madrid, Florence, restive in the chains of feudal fetters, had to burst the bonds or be forever lost.

And the only way to do it? The masses had to be brought into the struggle against the nobles. But who shall be put in their place? First, it was the idea of nationalist royalty: Louis XIV, Queen Elizabeth and Henry VIII. Later when the kings got too funky, the bourgeoisie developed the idea of the democratic republic, in which they ruled directly.

The images spew out of the projector: the discovery of America, the dynastic wars, the religious persecutions. Smolny draws his hand across his brow. How to show that the whole geopolitical territory of bourgeois economic power had to be consolidated by the bourgeoisie across dynastic and kingdom barriers as it had consolidated the cities? To show that the old internationalism of feudalism with its international Catholic church and its interdynastic marriages prevented consolidation? Who cared if the Burgundians in Southern France, the Normans in Northern France or the Parisians in Central France came from different ethnic or racial stock? Whenever the merchant-traders passed through these regions, didn't they all speak a similar language? International Latin was for the parasite church leaders and their bureaucracy. Any bourgeois could understand, "the mother tongue."

The movie images continued: Leonardo di Vinci, Shakespeare, Elizabeth the Great, Philip II, Monteverdi; the glories of the Renaissance are the glories of city-states, London, Florence, Venice, Rome, Amsterdam. Seedbeds of the New Nations.

The first target of the Nationalists was the internationalist Roman Catholic Church, with its condemnation of usury, its filthy rich monasteries, its control over learning, its *Italianate* power structure, its strictures on needed scientific investigation into ways to improve navigation, production, trade, its entanglement with the feudalists. The Roman Catholic Church had to go—the Religious Wars (1585-1719) were confused forms of wars for nation creation, led by the bourgeoisie against the internationalist feudal class.

Who would form the army? The masses! The peasants and artisans, and poorer tradesmen and city-workers, on whose backs the chair of the Pope and the feudal lords sat like the bronze idol of a hundred rip-off taxes. How to mobilize them behind bourgeois banners? Behind the battle cry, "For England, France and Spain and our God!"

The movie images show Martin Luther leading the Lutheran struggle in the German Kingdoms, Jean Calvin leading the Calvinist struggle in the Swiss Cantons, French Provinces and in the Dutch city-states: Henry VIII forms the Anglican Church, fusing together King, emerging bourgeoisie,

royalist, nobility, and God, under the banner of English Nationalism.

Smolny speaks out loud, "Notice who's doing the actual fighting—the common brothers and sisters. Of course, many of the bourgeoisie also took part in these wars. Look at Cromwell there."

(Yeah, says another voice out of the darkness, **but how does this relate to black nationalism?**)

Smolny looks at the film images of the Civil War in England between the Puritans (representing Protestantism and the bourgeoisie) and the Cavaliers (representing Catholicism, Anglo-Catholicism, and Feudalism). "Well, you can compare Cromwell to Malcolm X and the Puritans to black nationalism in its positive phase. Just as the Puritan lower class (called the Dissenters) were persecuted by the Anglo-Catholic nobility, so is the black working class oppressed and exploited by the Caucasoid bourgeoisie!"

(**Caucasoid bourgeoisie?**)

Smolny's mouth feels suddenly dry. "Yeah. I don't think we should use words like black or white or Latin to describe racists and capitalists. What we have are racists, see: a white skinned racist should be called a caucasoid, a black skinned racist is a negroid, and all other color of racists should be called mongoloid."

(An exasperated voice calls out from the darkness. Hey, Prof. this is getting confusing. You are hitting us with too many ideas all at once. Can I suggest that you can the movie for awhile and go back to this business about the black agenda? I mean, all this is good information, but it sounds to me like it's gonna take more than one lecture to get it all together.)

Smolny feels angry at the just criticism. So he responds with a note of sarcasm, "Okay, okay! Cut the film for a minute, Alvin. I think we're going too fast again. Gimme the slides of the Black Assembly... no, not that part... yeah, right on! That's it.

"The point I was trying to make with all this historical background is that an oppressed bourgeoisie inclusive of its petty bourgeois needs to have a mass movement in order to struggle successfully. It must build that movement among the most exploited segments of the working and peasant class. An oppressed bourgeoisie must link its own grievances against its oppressor with the pain, suffering, and outrage of the lower class in order to lead the lower class masses to a bourgeois victory. The European bourgeois' nationalism was a reaction against the feudalism of the aristocracy, an aristocracy which looked down on the bourgeoisie and the lower classes as inferiors. Therefore, unity between the European bourgeoisie and the lower class was essential in crushing the feudalistic aristocracy and its hereditarian ideas of inequality and hierarchy."

(A Latin student raises his hand from the left of the room. **That stuff about hereditarian ideas of inequality means that the aristocrats said that they were born superior and non-aristocrats were born inferior, right?**)

"Yes, that's right! It was similar to the racist ideas about the inferiority of black and Latin and

other minority workers, and the pig ideas about the innate, ah, inborn inferiority of the whole working class. Bourgeois radical nationalists asserted that everybody who was a member of the nation was equal, regardless of race, color, or creed. Relative to aristocratic feudalism, this was a heavy, progressive idea. To that degree, the rise of bourgeois nationalism was for many people in the masses a powerful reformist movement that made vast changes! But they were reforms only. When the bourgeoisie finally created nations based on the general principles of the democratic republic, though with different kinds of democratic republics, they in fact had created **dictatorships of the bourgeoisie**, which were to oppress the lower classes through **capitalistic** rather than **feudalistic** forms of exploitation."

He paused, expecting questions. There was only an attentive silence. Damn, he thought to himself self-critically, this lecture is really disjointed. I ought to do a really scholarly article on it. He continued:

"To sum up: the oppressed bourgeoisie is revolutionary in its own interests. But it is reactionary or reformist when it comes to interests of the working class itself. Therefore, all black nationalist movements which have been controlled or carried out by those who were either members of the black bourgeoisie, or who were sympathetic to the political ideologies of the black bourgeoisie have reflected this same overall process."

He paused as a new thought crowded aside his next point.

"Technically speaking the black bourgeoisie are not full members of the big bourgeoisie. They are petty-bourgeois."

(Hand shot up again. **Big bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, what do those words mean?**)

The big bourgeoisie are those large industrialists, capitalists, bankers, etc. who own the great means of production, who own the 500 largest corporations mentioned in **Fortune**. They own them legally or have the controlling interest. The petty bourgeoisie are either those who have small independent operations (farms, shops, small factories) or who have non-controlling interest in the big 500. The so-called black bourgeoisie are more often members of the petty bourgeoisie class or boojies. And while some of them may even mount up and become millionaires, they nevertheless are in a secondary or tertiary position, along with hundreds of white boojies, when compared to the rich (multimillionaires) and the super rich (billionaires) who control U.S. imperialism. However, and don't you forget this, the boojies and the bourgeoisie may fight among themselves, and even kill each other. But they unite as a class against the working class. They are committed to maintaining a racist, capitalist system and are all staunchly anti-populist, even the most liberal of them."

(So, what you're saying is that you have junior pigs and senior pigs, but they're all pigs, right?)

"Yes, something like that."

to be continued

# really digging 'ROOTS'

Have we witnessed anything close to this since World War II? **Roots** is a culture-intensive phenomenon comparable only to the war propaganda of the early 1940s. This country is abuzz with it. Everyone marvels at the fact that 130 million people tuned in to its TV version, more than watched, we are all quick to note, **Gone With The Wind**. But it is equally important to note that the racism of **Gone With The Wind** was not hammered into the political consciousness of the American masses with the intensity of **Roots**: eight days running, fifteen hours in all, so that wherever one went, whatever one spoke about, sooner or later **Roots** became the topic of conversation.

That is only part of the story. 1,400,000 copies of the book are now in print. Before the TV series, a syndicated serial of it ran in major newspapers across the nation. Close to 300 community and four year colleges are offering courses on the book and TV series, based on a curriculum put together by the University of Miami-Dade County. Furthermore, a movie of the book is in the talking stages, with predictions of success equal to its TV showing, and a rerun of the ABC program is scheduled.

Consider also these facts. First: on the Saturday of the eight-day ABC series, CBS devoted ten minutes of its prime time newscast (6 PM) to the current state of the civil rights movement. It attacked racism, extolled the fighters for civil rights, and concluded that the fight for civil rights must and will continue, but more in terms of court battles than the street battles of the sixties, and more in terms of black/white cooperation than militant nationalism. It closed the ten minute clip with an interview of Vernon E. Jordan, Executive Director of the Urban League, who said that the problems are no longer strictly racial problems but "people problems," to be dealt with by legal and political work within the framework of the system.



Second: shortly after the ABC program, NBC ran a six week series, two hours a week, called **The Fight Against Slavery**, an account of the struggle in Great Britain at the end of the 18th century to end the English part in the slave trade. The program, like **Roots**, showed the nightmare of the raids to imprison Africans, of the mid-passage, the rapings, the whippings and tortures of those blacks who refused to accept the indignities of slavery. It attacked slavery as immoral and the slave traders and owners as degenerate and, in many cases, perverted individuals. It showed the people opposing the slave trade, who were incidentally almost all white, as deeply committed to the idea that all people are equal, that all people are the same, no matter what the skin color. In a variety of scenes, it made clear that the London working class, wherever possible, aided and abetted runaway slaves. Less dramatic than **Roots**, it had the air of sticking close to the historical facts. The fight was mostly a legal one, one that used the laws of England to throw obstacles in the way of the slave trade. By no means did the same millions watch this NBC program as watched **Roots**. But still, several more millions were exposed to a view of slavery quite different from the usual one, and for six consecutive weeks.

All this adds up to a cultural-propaganda Event with a big "E."

What explains this phenomenon? Is it simply that some lucky TV profiteers accidentally stumbled on a money-maker? Of course, profit is always an answer where capitalists are concerned. The dollar-bill is near and dear to the heart of the money-grubber. But is money-making enough of an answer, or even the primary answer? In other words, is the massive event which this unusual view of slavery has now become simply a spinoff of some capitalists' aim to make more money? Or are we witnessing a deliberately organized indoctrination ploy on the part of the ruling class at a level of intensity enormously greater in terms of the masses reached and the energy, time, and money put into it than any propaganda attempt in recent years, including the effort put into eugenics, the line of cultural deprivation, and sociobiology.

We could oversimplify the matter and say that it is total conspiracy. Accident is never absent from any event, especially in a competitive, money-making market system. But a look at the history of **Roots** suggests a high degree of long-term propaganda planning. Consider these facts. The **Reader's Digest**, never known for a particularly anti-racist point of view, financed a good part of Haley's twelve year research for the book. The book was published some six months before the ABC series. Shortly after its publication, it ran as a syndicated serial in dozens of major newspapers. The story was selected as a book-club offering. To this point we have the ordinary story of the publishing world making a book a best seller.

Yet some planning is required. Newspapers

cannot so quickly put long running features into its columns without disrupting other materials they have contracted for. Hence, it is very likely that they had some advance notice and made advance plans for its appearance. This is even truer of TV. Is it very likely that ABC decided to run the series only after the book proved to be a best seller? Hardly so. The cast of big-name performers, many of whom are booked for months and months in advance, argues against this. The extensive and skillful rewriting of the book for TV, the high quality of the continuity in dialogue, of acting, directing, the excellence of timing to create suspense and drama all argue against some quickly turned-out series. Lead-time in TV, from the conception of a program, to the writing of contracts for top professionals with tight schedules, to the lining up of sponsors, is a rather elaborate and complex affair. All this being so, it is more reasonable to assume that **Roots** was in the making as a TV series months before the book ever proved to be a best seller.

And what about the academic package out of Florida adopted by so many schools? Doesn't this also suggest something more than lucky accident? The similarity in point of view in the followups on NBC and CBS to **Roots** may largely be an attempt, after the fact, to cash in on what proved to be such a profitable propaganda ploy. But it is also curious that the material fitting the same line as **Roots** is so handily available, not to mention that the lead-time problems cited above also go for NBC (although not to the same extent, since the **Fight Against Slavery** is a BBC tape). Add to these clear indications of long-term preparations the fact that every field of communication is involved—the news media, education, entertainment, book publishing—all at outlays of sizable sums of money. The conclusion is hard to avoid: the ruling class is embarked on a massive indoctrination campaign that appears, on the surface, to be a more accurate historical account by the media than ever before, and is more sympathetic to the slaves, in a non-missionary way, than any account given before in the mass media.

If this is so, then **Roots** and its message are not to be taken lightly. In some way it is a sign of coming ruling-class policy that may complicate our fight against racism immeasurably. It appears to stand in contradiction to other ruling-class propaganda efforts, such as sociobiology, the support of fascist-hate groups, the manufacturing of "black crime waves," and so on.

What does the ruling class have in mind? Some of what they have in mind has already been underscored by the various articles on the "Cultural Page" of **Challenge-Desafio** in the several issues after the series appeared. But I wonder if it makes any sense, given the concentrated nature of this ruling-class campaign, to say that "there are some good things to be said about **Roots**," as many people contend, and as the Feb. 10, 1977 **Challenge-Desafio** review does in its opening

sentence? This article hopes to show that there are no good things to be said for **Roots**, not out of a spirit of ultra-leftism or sectarianism, but as a consequence of what it in fact portrays and how it affects the audience. Successful propaganda requires, even of the bourgeoisie, some contact with reality. If the propaganda is made up of whole cloth, the lived experience of the working class and of other classes whose conditions of life make them potential allies of the working class will demonstrate, no matter how intensive the indoctrination, that the ruling class is fantasizing for the purpose of deluding. In order to make less obvious the way its ideas are at odds with working class experience, the ruling class is compelled to weave some historical truth into its propaganda. The less the working class notices this, the less able will it be to resist the indoctrination the ruling class plans for it.

In the case of **Roots**, the ruling class uses, particularly in the matter of the slave trade, a larger amount of historical truth than it usually does. Does this mean then that the opportunity it affords us for discussing racism on a mass basis is a good aspect of **Roots**? A Feb. 24, 1977 reply in **Challenge-Desafio** to the review mentioned above suggests this and it reflects a widespread notion. Isn't this the same as saying that speedup is a good aspect of capitalism because it affords us the opportunity to discuss the nature of surplus value? The Feb. 24 reply compares this concession of historical truth to winning a wage increase. The analogy is clever, but nevertheless false. A wage increase cuts into surplus value, at least for a while. It is fought for by the working class and not, as **Roots**, something presented to it through long and deliberate planning by the ruling class.

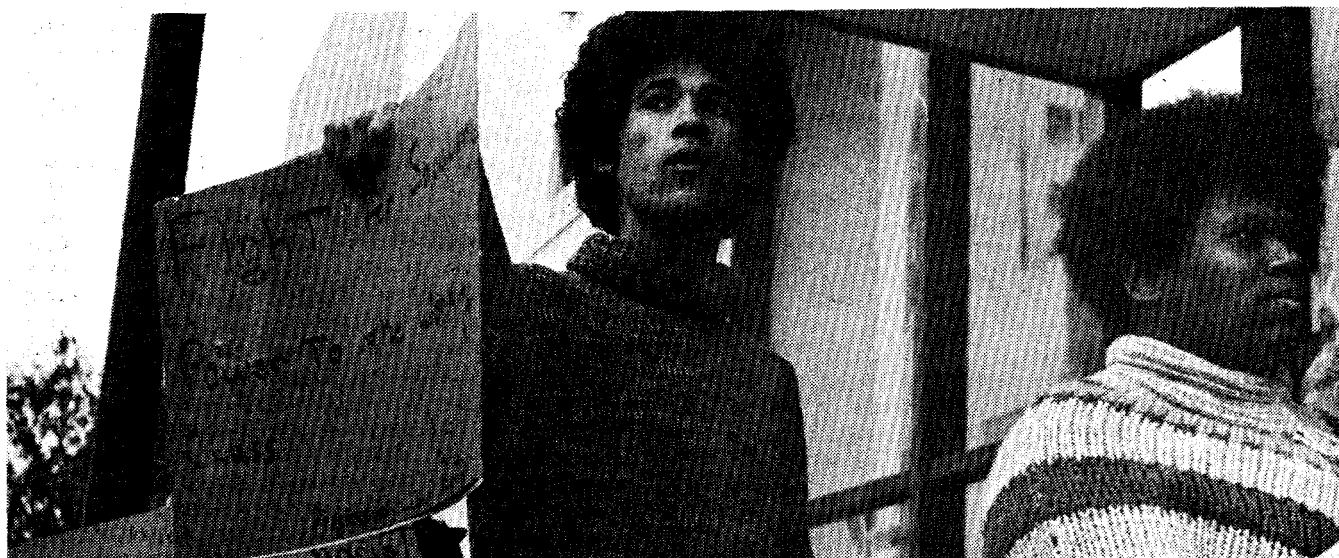
No, I come back to my original point; there are no good aspects to **Roots**, just as there are no good aspects to capitalism, although quite obviously every aspect of capitalism, even what is seem-

ingly benign, affords us opportunities for exposing it, for discussing racism, and for connecting it to communist ideas. But these opportunities exist for us precisely because there are no good aspects to capitalism.

One consequence of this "good aspects" approach, whether it be the more limited praise of the first review or the more embracing praise of the Feb. 24 reply, is that it misses one of the essential messages of the TV series. It is true that the series, especially in the beginning, shows racism to be a nightmare for millions of black people. But it doesn't actually show it to be an "unmitigated nightmare," because it doesn't show what was, by far, the chief aspect of the nightmare, the aspect of slavery that made it a **necessary consequence in the development of capitalism**, both here and in Europe.

The major forms of violence which the program features are rape, the brutality of the slave trading captain and crew in mid-passage, and the whippings administered when one or another family member refuses to be treated with indignity. In an informal sampling of black and white students, taken by a PL member at a mid-west university, these were precisely the cruelties they singled out, without any prompting from the interviewer.

What is the truth of the matter? Were these the major nightmares that slaves had to deal with? Oh, they were real enough, widespread enough. But how do they compare to the violence and cruelty, the number of deaths of children and adults, to the broken lives and benumbed families as a consequence of the labor-intensive work extracted from the slaves in the field? Compared to the everyday, day-long brutality administered in the field, these were the least, although not unimportant part of the nightmare. Once the production of the South became primarily production for exchange in the world market, the need for labor-intensive work used up the lives of masses of slaves over a span, on the average, of no more



Only Socialist Revolution Can Kill Racism

than seven years. Compare *Roots* in this respect to *Last Grave at Dimbaza*, the film about South Africa, where the stress is not on rape and whippings, but on the brutal maiming and loss of life as a consequence of labor-intensive exploitation. Not very much, if anything in *Roots* hinted at this. No, what *Roots* showed frankly was that the slave owners were bad, all of them bad. But why? Because they were, by and large, perverted and degenerate. The worst of them, like those portrayed by Chuck Connors and Lloyd Bridges, were simply cruel for the sake of being cruel.

But what does this imply? That capitalism needed slavery? Not at all. It implies that slavery was the result of widespread moral aberration. Oh yes, there is much aberration to slavery and racism. But slavery and racism have always had more to do with the needs of capitalism than the degeneracy of the capitalists.

Without slave labor the means for capitalist accumulation on the scale required at that historical moment could not have been achieved. Without slave labor superprofits could not have been extracted from both the white and black sector of the working class. Without slavery and its attendant racism, the ruling class would not have had its chief means of maintaining its power over the working class.

None of this is even hinted at by *Roots*. We would not expect it to be. The purpose in saturating the masses of Americans with *Roots* was surely not to prove the necessity of slavery and racism for capitalism, but the opposite. The failure to recognize the omission of the characteristic of slavery which makes it a necessary part of the capitalist system, and which therefore opens the door to the idea of eliminating capitalism, is a sign of the degree of missionary outlook (revisionism) on the left.

The nationalism of the series has been noted. But more needs to be said about it. No doubt an understanding of history is an essential ingredient in developing revolutionary consciousness. No doubt the bourgeoisie has done everything it could to deprive the working class of such an understanding. Many viewers of *Roots* testify to this when they say, as newspaper articles in the *New York Times* and elsewhere report, that they never realized this is what went on. But, as the point just made about the nightmare of slavery shows, seeing violence and brutality, in and of itself, is not yet an understanding of history that leads to revolutionary consciousness.

And what about the notion that "a small piece of working class history has been returned to us" by the bourgeoisie in the showing of *Roots* and the notion that "slaves were stolen from the great civilizations of Africa?" The most dominant view of where slaves came from, until the *Roots* program, was the primitive, savage tribe. This is a falsification on two levels. It falsifies the character of tribal society and it ignores the fact that great empires existed in Africa centuries ago. Well, *Roots* now admits that. But in what way? It replaces the image of Africans as

savages one step removed from tree-dwelling with the image of Africans as either royal-blooded or members of a great warrior class. Yes, Africa had empires. But what does that signify? High culture? Equal intelligence? Do we need more than tribal society to demonstrate the capacity for complex culture, high degrees of skill, and capacities for enormous intelligence, no matter what the skin color? What empires signify, first and foremost, is **culture based on class exploitation**. It signifies class struggle and that the bulk of Africans belonged not to royalty or to the warrior class, but to the masses of exploited. It signifies internal regional and continental warfare, a good deal of which resulted in slaves for the slave traders.

That is more like the true history of the working class. The bourgeoisie, in presenting *Roots*, has not returned any history to us. It has given us a bogus history, one that is for a number of reasons more comfortable to live with nowadays, no matter if one is black or white, than the "savage" view. It is history from which we may develop revolutionary consciousness—but only by exposing it as bogus, and not pretending it is otherwise. The failure to recognize the nature of this nationalism, which is quite sophisticated rather than crude, is a sign that, where a missionary outlook exists, not far behind is a nationalist view or an apology for one.

The debate in our press so far concludes that *Roots* leads to cynicism or defeatism. It seems to me this notion is also quite wrong. As a propaganda effort all signs about it point to quite the opposite purpose. It is an attempt to raise hopes and produce faith in the system. The notion that it had the effect of raising levels of militancy is equally wrong. In using certain partial truths to make its bogus representation of history seem more credible, it indeed took the calculated risk of stirring up some hostile, seemingly militant responses. The risk is not as great as might be imagined. The ruling class can live with the hostility very easily, since it does nothing to diminish internal workingclass antagonism. The increased level of hostility is the main risk the bourgeoisie gambled on. To be sure some cases of anger emerged. But these have proved to be quite temporary.

The sum total of responses (in the interviews conducted by the commercial press and in the same informal poll of students at a midwest university cited before) point quite another way. The main responses among white people are some defensiveness and a heightened sympathy for blacks. Among blacks the response is a heightened sense of national pride and of the family in the fight to survive. Both groups, at least on the verbal level, express a sense of unity, but around the question of allowing everybody to achieve middle-class aspirations, through the means offered by the bourgeoisie, "the family against the world," etc. It left a large number of whites and blacks believing that these aspirations are, for one thing, the only worthwhile aspirations and, for another,



### Harriet Tubman, Heroine of Anti-Slavery Battles Before Civil War.

achievable by everyone, providing each follows the example of the "family solution," within the framework of capitalism. That is faith and hope, not cynicism or militancy—precisely what this massive indoctrination ploy is designed to do.

What *Roots* pushes is ethnic pride, the resolution of problems through family loyalty, and the use of one's brains to outsmart (not outfight) the morally degenerate forces of the world. Clearly, as other writers on the issue have pointed out in **Challenge-Desafio**, this is a liberal bourgeois line. How it deceives and works against historical understanding and revolutionary consciousness is obvious, once we shake off our own revisionist (missionary and nationalist) habits. But we are back now to the question: Why has the ruling class elected to concentrate so much effort and quality on a liberal form of propaganda, on a form that seems to defuse racism, even if it fosters bourgeois illusion, when its international crisis impells it more and more toward fascism? Is this a sign that they are abandoning eugenics, sociobiology, the hate groups, the intensification of racism all along the line, with the result of increased segregation and exploitation of the entire working class? By no means. This new, massive, liberal indoctrination is the kid-glove cover-up of the mailed fist of racism.

It would be a mistake to think that the pro-black sympathy and humanitarianism of the *Roots* approach is merely a ruse whereby to sneak in the overt racism of the other ideology—the apology for capitalism and 'faith in the system.' The material realities of U.S. capitalism—particularly with respect to the size and relationships of the different sectors within the working class and the relationship of the working class to the capitalists—make these contradictory lines first a necessary precondition of fascism, then a basic requirement of it once it is established. The particular overseas arenas, Africa and Asia, in which the imperialist rivalry between the United

States and the Soviet Union is now taking place and will take place for many years also make the two lines necessary before and after the advent of fascism.

That liberal humanitarianism and overt racism are necessary to each other has in fact always been the case in the economic and political control exercised by capitalism over the black and white working class, even in the days of slavery. Take for example the double use the plantation owner could make of owning labor as a piece of movable property. On the one hand, slave labor could be used to produce crops. The harder the labor force worked each hour and the longer each day, the greater the crop produced, the higher the profits. For those unfamiliar with Marxist and Progressive Labor Party economics, the amount of money over and above the cost of keeping the slave force alive, which the plantation owner received in the market place when exchanging the crop for money, is called **surplus value**. The amount of labor power and the amount of labor time over and above the power and time needed to produce that part of the crop equal to the cost of keeping the slave force alive, is called **surplus labor**. The more surplus labor the plantation owner controlled, the more profit he made.

But as a consequence of owning human labor rather than hiring it, the plantation owner had another way of increasing his supply and control of surplus labor—that is, besides speedup and the long workday. The slaves he owned, and precisely because he owned them, could be used to breed more slaves. He could convert this human crop into cash, i.e. profit or surplus value, in two ways: by selling it outright to others or by putting it to work in his own fields to produce more of that other commodity, the vegetable crop.

A recent book by Herbert Gutman, **The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925**, contains some interesting evidence on this matter. For example, John C. Reed, a planter from Georgia, reported that "the greatest profit of all was what the master thought of and talked of all the day long—the natural increase of his slaves." Reed called "slave rearing" the "leading industry" of the South. For it to be profitable, he said, it had to keep "slaves healthy and rapidly multiplying." Another planter, John A. Calhoun, advised against overworking slaves. It produced "premature old age, bodily deformity and debility of constitution, and checks the increase of females." Overwork produced maximum crops, but it had two drawbacks. It forced the slave owner to buy more slaves, which almost every year sold at higher prices; and it killed "the goose to obtain the golden egg."

The contradiction here is obvious. The two ways of profiting from slavery required two different practices. One, the production of maximum field crops, required the whiplash, the extraction of labor power at the fastest pace possible, until the laborer was broken, deformed, used up. The only limits to **how** fast were the same limits for any machinery. It had to pay back its price

of purchase and maintenance and yield back in product enough money not only to replace the used up human machine but to purchase additional human machines. How many additional human machines? The answer is a matter of historical record, not abstract principle. In terms of time, as pointed out earlier, this averaged out in many places down South, after the plantation system got started, to no more than seven years.

But the production of the human crop required more tolerant treatment of slaves. The physical health, particularly of the women who were most fertile, had to be protected. In addition, stable family life among slaves had to be allowed. The records show that such conditions prevailed in a number of instances. For example, again from the Gutman book, three different families in the network of families on the Good Hope Plantation, South Carolina produced twelve or more children each, in periods ranging from 20 to 22 years. Each of these families had a single father and mother and were the original families of the plantation and gave rise to the network of families that existed before the beginning of the Civil War. The other families in the network, which numbered far more than three, produced anywhere from four to eight children, over periods of time that more often than not exceeded seven years. When one considers that slaves sold for such prices as \$1500 and \$3000 in those years, the profit represented by the human crop on this one plantation alone was enormous.

These two different ways of producing profit, both of which existed side by side and were often simultaneously practiced on one and the same plantation, fostered two ideologies. The whiplash required an ideology which regarded the slave as a subhuman creature of innate brutishness, savagery, and intractability, who could only be controlled by iron discipline. The breeding of slaves required a paternalistic humanitarianism, a notion of the slave as a child that needed the master's care and civilizing instruction.

In making profit through breeding, the plantation owner found himself in contradiction to the marriage and family customs and practices of his slaves. He needed a stable set of affairs among families for a specific economic reason. When other economic reasons were more compelling, he couldn't care less for the family structure. Poor breeders, unmanageable husbands (poor workers) were sold away from each other and from their children or their children away from them at the flick of a wrist.

The slaves established family ties for their own purposes. It was a means of withstanding the dehumanization of slavery and of establishing personal and community relationships on the basis of respect and affection. The last thing the plantation owner wanted to see was a set of interlocking families. Such a network of families was dangerous, because it formed a widespread community through which slaves could organize resistance to slavery, not on a family basis, but on a class one. The plantation owner simply

wanted single family stable relationships because it suited his breeding needs and, above all, he wanted the slave families to be contained within his own plantation. Yet, since the slaves had developed their own set of marriage customs which made incestuous marriages (marriage of close blood relatives) taboo, and would not be coerced into breaking these taboos (by such means as refusing to have sexual intercourse with the tabooed persons and even self-induced abortions), the plantation owner had more and more to allow slaves to marry persons outside the plantation—if he wanted his slaves to be productive in child bearing.

At the same time that stable families, when they formed a network constituting a social class, represented a risk, the plantation owner discovered a contradiction between the stable family and the demands of resistance that was politically useful to him. Again the evidence is from Gutman. A Baptist preacher advised planters to press for slave marriages and families:

Local as well as family associations, thus cast about him (the slave), are strong yet pleasing cords binding him to his master. His welfare is so involved in the order of things that he would not for any consideration have it disturbed. He is made happier and safer; put beyond discontent, or temptations to rebellion and abduction.

A Natchez overseer of a cotton plantation reported that the family made it easier to catch runaway slaves: "(they) almost always kept in the neighborhood, because they did not like to go where they could not sometimes get back and see their families." When they came back "to see their families," the overseer said, he would "put the dogs on (them) again" and capture them.

From this brief account it can be seen how the TV production of *Roots* reduces a very complex and contradictory state of affairs with regard to the family to a one-sided portrait. The simplification, as a cultural symbol, fits what were the economic, social, and political needs of the slave owner. The slave owner no longer exists. Does it also fit the needs of the capitalist in the last quarter of the twentieth century, when his internal and international contradictions drive him more and more toward fascism? Is it a necessary ideological counterpart, not simply a trick, to the racism of the whiplash? The needs of capitalism in the pre-fascist stage and after it suggests that it is.

What sort of material needs do the capitalists have to fulfill in order to insure the success of fascism? The answer is really very simple: a large standing army, of considerable reliability, and a working class, producing war material and other commodities, docile enough or terrorized enough to accept maximum exploitation.

How large will that army have to be? Well, if the armed forces of the United States during World War II numbered 11 million, then surely the armed forces for a current world-wide war would have to number at least 15 to 20 million,

and probably more like 20 to 30 million. Given the size of the black section of the American working class, it is impossible for the ruling class to put an army of that size in the field without a large part of it being minority. Close to 30% of the present volunteer army is minority. The chances are that that percentage or more, for a number of reasons not the least of which is the sky-high rate of joblessness among minority youth, will be required for a fascist army; in other words, somewhere between 7 and 10 million blacks and other minorities. Ruling class awareness of this problem shows up in the oddest places. Only in mid-February, the head of the Marine Corps voiced concern that the Ku Klux Klan's activities at Camp Pendleton may make it difficult to recruit blacks. The contradictions of racism are indeed hard to manipulate.

The Vietnam experience shows clearly that the ruling class has a real problem on its hands: black troops could not be counted on to support an anti-people, pro-fascist war. Since the option of excluding minorities from the armed services is logistically not open to the ruling class, it must find another means of guaranteeing reliability. It must do something to make a large portion of the black population willing to fight for the system.

A similar contradiction faces the capitalists with regard to the working class as a laboring force. The black and other minority portion of the working class is so large that the final solution policies that the Nazis practiced on the Jews of Europe is not viable. To ticket the black population for "final solution" would indeed be to kill the goose that lays the golden egg of maximum profits. This is not to say that there will not be slave-labor camps or even gas chambers, but these will have to be used on a more selective basis than they were on the Jews by the Nazis.

Of course, a variety of forms of police terror will be used to cow the working class, white and minority, into submission. Racism, as always, will be used to disarm and distract working class resistance. But even here the ruling class finds itself in a maze of contradictions. Racism is the chief weapon to divide the different sectors of the working class, to set them against each other rather than against the oppressing rulers. However, if that manufactured antagonism is allowed to go too far—to the point, for example, where white and black workers are physically at each others' throats—then the labor process itself is disrupted. The same problem is to be seen in the use of drugs and alcohol to pacify the working class. The overuse of these disrupts the labor process. In other words, the devices for controlling the working class as a whole in order to maximize an uninterrupted process for extracting profits turn into devices negating this purpose. The ruling class needs to use drugs, alcohol, and above all racism to the optimum point, but not beyond. To insure that this point is reached but not exceeded, the ruling class needs, in addition to whiplash racism, another ideological approach.

Another logistics problem faces the ruling class. In order to manage an army and working

class with so large a proportion of minorities, it finds itself required more and more to establish a middle corps of minority officers in the armed forces, a middle corps of minority managers in industry, and a middle corps of minority bureaucrats and officials in politics. The Nazis setup a *Judenrat*\* to guarantee its policy of final solution. If it had not been for the *Judenrat*, the Jewish rank-and-file would very likely have resisted more massively, more effectively, and much earlier than the few isolated rebellions finally did.

The black minority middle corps, on the military, industrial, and political levels, will serve a similar purpose. They will make it easier to maintain a reliable army, including its minority component, and a docile working class, without going beyond the point in the use of racism to defeat the aims of the ruling class.

Detroit supplies an example, in commerce, industry, the police force, and city government, of how well this works. Coleman Young, the mayor, has been able to consolidate the most stable section of the black population to support a curfew for youth, to beef up the police force, to entertain restoring a large decoy force to trap youth into allegedly criminal behavior, and to come out for more prison facilities to jail, without trial, what he calls the 600 hard-core juvenile delinquents in the city. The man he ran against for the mayorship two years ago, the white Police Commissioner, called for similar steps. He could not get them accepted, in fact got defeated for proposing them, where Young now rallies the city with success to put them over. Incidentally, Young announced his program for mass arrests at least two weeks before the special LEAA report of early March which called for the same thing as well as wiretapping and police immunity from any actions taken to quell city rebellions, a clear invitation to massive terror in and murder of the black community.

How large will such a middle corps have to be? Considering the numbers it will have to manage in the military and in industry, it will have to be fairly substantial. Even if it only taps a tenth of the minority population (to use an old formula—the "talented tenth") we are talking about 3 to 5 million people. To recruit a force of this size, to command its loyalty, again makes the development of another ideological approach crucial, even if it has a contradictory surface to whiplash racism.

---

\* The *Judenrat* ("Jewish Councils," in German) were bodies of Jewish "leaders"—businessmen, rabbis, professionals and other nonworking-class types—whom the Nazis chose to control the European ghettos. The *Judenrat* provided Jewish police, brought Jews to the Nazis for shipment to the camps, and discouraged any attempts to fight back against Nazi extermination. At the beginning of the Warsaw ghetto uprising (1944), the Jewish workers killed the Warsaw *Judenrat* first. Many *Judenrat* members sent other Jews to their deaths in return for emigration to Palestine, and became founders of the State of Israel. See R. Hilberg, *Destruction of the European Jews*, index, "*Judenrat*"; Ben Hecht, *Perfidy*.



The drift of this analysis is I'm sure, clear to the reader. The message of **Roots** is the cultural answer, in necessary companionship with "genetic inferiority," eugenics, sociobiology and so on, to the various contradictory material conditions which must be satisfied if the ruling class is to be able to impose fascism on us.

A reliable army, a docile working class, and unquestionably a loyal middle corps is built, to a large extent, on **nationalism**. **Roots** ennobles nationalism, makes it the storehouse of the dream of freedom. But the nationalism it promotes is different from the nationalism that grew among blacks in the 1960s. The 1960s nationalism pretended to be an opponent of U.S. nationalism. The nationalism of **Roots** functions on one side as an opponent of slavery, but not of present-day American nationalism, nor is it shown as something to be opposed by present-day American nationalism. It contains, as we have mentioned, a vision of abstract freedom that is consistent with the vision of abstract freedom offered by American nationalism. It is now brought into the pantheon of all the other ethnic nationalisms, nurtured and protected by American nationalism, which poses as the champion of national independence. But note, it is a segregated pantheon: each to his own thing, with mutual respect for the others, of course, and each of which, in order to retain its identity, has the problem of preserving the purity of that grand abstraction called "national culture." Perhaps this explains why Jimmy Carter could make his "ethnic purity" remark without causing more than a flurry of concern among the black population and without destroying his widespread support at least among the section of the black population that did vote, the middle class and the labor aristocracy.

This particular part of the message of **Roots** is also an answer to the international problems of U.S. capitalism. The United States has not been notably successful in recent years in continuing its support of the most out-and-out racist regimes, especially in Africa. So far the Soviet Union has outmaneuvered them as phony supporters of national independence. A number of signs indicate that U.S. capitalism is seriously considering writing off some of these fascist governments. Andrew Young and his statements about Rhodesia and South Africa are not to be taken mechanically as camouflage. If the write-off does occur, the purpose will not be to get rid of racism or fascism, but to buy off a section of the black population to safeguard and extend the interests of U.S. and West European capitalism against the Soviet Union. The **Roots** line, and some practice in favor of the middle-level corps at home and abroad to give it credibility, are required to establish that bought-off section as the legitimate freedom fighters of the area, although what they will be in fact are the administrators of capitalist racism and fascism.

Finally, the logistics we have been talking about also demand the family notion, I mean the family as an isolated unit within which to work out social

relationships and through which to make it in a world of many dangers—the typical bourgeois concept of the family. Belief in such a family unit and some measure of stabilizing such a unit in practice serve the same ends that they did under slavery. Such a family unit makes those who have attained it unwilling to disturb the system on one hand and more vulnerable to the dogs used to police the system, no matter whether they come on two feet, as they most often do, or on four.

In **Roots**, one gets no sense of the family as a unit within a network of class relationships. One gets only a sense of an isolated group, whose most militant expression is the typical possessive cry of the bourgeois family: "If ever you come bothering *me* or *mine* (my italics), I'll kill you." There may and will be a reward for the middle-level misleaders who hold to that view—but only at the price of sacrificing the rest of us as cannon fodder and controlled drones for exploitation. Those of us who have not achieved the highly civilized state of segregated nationalism and isolated family belief and practice will probably be classified by the eugenicists and sociobiologists as creatures not far evolved from the herding animals. The masses of us may look human but are actually only kin to the beast, whose herd senses are perhaps best served in the capacity of cannon fodder and drone.

I have brought into contact with this the unity of opposites which is constituted by liberal anti-racist humanitarianism, as now expressed in **Roots**, and the ideology of what I have been calling the message of **Roots** a surface contradiction to racism. I have not meant that it is not a real contradiction. Nor have I meant that it is any less racist. When we strike through the surface, we see that both are racist insofar as both are crucial for the preconditions of, and the requirements after the coming of, fascism. Whether through instilling loyalty to and self-management of the system, or through brute forces, both aspects of bourgeois ideology ticket the working class, in the dark and the light skin, to be the war machine and the work machine of capitalism, to its political benefit and profit.

We have not seen the last of the **Roots** message or its attendant practices. It is a major indoctrination need of the ruling class. Because of its liberal clothing, it demands all our skill and commitment to expose. Because it is likely to appeal strongly to the forces who should be open to revolutionary ideas, we dare not ignore the battle against this cultural campaign or be slipshod about it.

...

*Read*

**CHALLENGE!**



*shifting sands of*

# **IMPERIALIST**

# **ALLIANCES**

The following notes are intended to help orient the discussion on the crisis within the U.S. imperialist orbit. The general point of view below is that U.S. imperialism's decline is paralleled by a disintegration of the post World War II alliance, and that this disintegration seems to be intensifying.

Two approaches seem plausible:

a) The Japanese and Western Europeans (French, Germans, Italians, British, etc. etc.), who have been the junior partner of U.S. capital, will continue in this capacity, with no basic change in alignments.

b) The unity between U.S. imperialism and its current allies is relative and will most likely turn into conflict before too long. This conflict is related to the world's main contradiction—U.S.-Soviet rivalry.

These notes will examine the second hypothesis.

**I. The flimsiness of the U.S. alliance at its strongest point.** In the years following WW2, when U.S. imperialism was riding the crest, it was still incapable of forcing its allies to fight meaningfully for its interests. If an alliance is only as strong as its weakest members' willingness to engage in armed struggle for it, the U.S. empire was never too solid. Korea proved this and Vietnam brought it home in spades. Where today is there a war the U.S. could conceivably fight for which any NATO country or Japan would commit troops or material? One feature of the past 25 years was the increased relative strength of the "junior partners," attributable to the fact they, unlike the

U.S., didn't have to squander huge amounts of surplus on their military machines.

Now, however, a new element enters the contradiction. By virtue of this increased relative strength itself, sharper inter-capitalist contradictions have emerged within the alliance. Can the West Germans and the Japanese—who have the strongest economies of these countries—count on the U.S. military to protect them? The lesson of Vietnam can hardly have been lost on these bourgeoisies, especially the Japanese, who border both the USSR and China and whose own army is virtually worthless at the present time.

**II. Heightened competition between the U.S. and its allies,** The May 19, 1977 editorial in **Challenge-Desafio** makes this point from a number of angles. Apparently, the U.S. ruling class wanted to come out of the "summit" confab with a set of "orderly marketing agreements" (OMAS) to cartelize trade among the industrial capitalist nations. The U.S. capitalists are of course interested in correcting their balance of payments problem and in limiting imports. This shows up in their current bilateral talks with Japan, Taiwan and Korea, aimed at curtailing TV exports. It shows up on the European side in the European Economic Community ("Common Market") bosses' talks with Japan aimed at holding back steel and ship exports. And, as Carter indicated, U.S. automakers are worried about foreign competition, especially from the Japanese, who have 4 of the 5 top-selling foreign cars in the U.S.

In 1948, when the U.S. ruled the roost, it was perfectly happy with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which provided for more or less untrammelled trade. "No limits on wheeling and dealing as long as we run the show"—this is capitalist logic. Now, however, a changed situation brings about a call for OMAS. This was not exactly a booming success at the London meetings. The problem is that the capitalists can agree on anything in principle but it is very hard

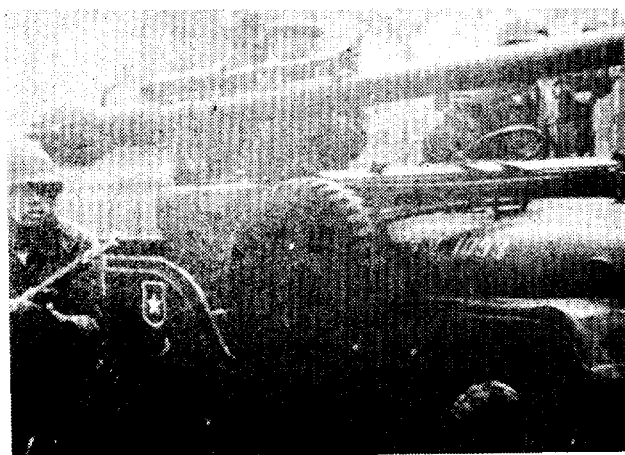
for them to get together on specifics. Cutting Japanese exports is wonderful—for U.S. TV and automakers and for European steelbuilders and shipmakers—but why should the Japanese go for it?

For example, European shipbuilders are desperately trying to get a market-sharing agreement with the Japanese. The European share of the world market has shrunk from 51% in 1960 to 22% in 1975. The Japanese share has **jumped** by the same amount in the same period. The European proposal is that the Japanese share all OECD\* ship orders on a 50-50 basis. The Japanese reject this. To protect their ship industries, European governments will resort to subsidies, thereby adding to the working class' burden, increasing inflation, and weakening themselves in the long run. The U.S. has done the same—cf—The government's record \$700 million giveaway to General Dynamics.\*\*

Furthermore, as C-D points out, the West German bosses told the U.S. to get lost as far as their nuclear hegemony was concerned. These examples and many others that could be produced indicate that, while the OECD alliance retains important aspects of unity, the **trend** is toward heightened conflict on all sides. (see **Business Week**, May 9 and Feb. 28).

Top U.S. imperialist analysts are perfectly aware that this situation gravely weakens NATO. On May 11, Sulzberger said that unless NATO could come up with a new rallying cry, it might well disintegrate. Lawrence Veit, an important bourgeois economist and member of the CFR, wrote in a recent issue of **Foreign Affairs**:

From a European point of view, the pattern of each economy increasingly going its independent way is a source of deep concern, even anxiety; it has been demonstrated that a course once chosen is not readily altered. It is not just that the chances of accomplishing the goals of the European Economic community—monetary union and policy harmonization—now appear to have receded. The more immediate worry is that the concrete achievements of the EEC, including its common agricultural policy, industrial integration, and even the customs union, are endangered by a rising tide of economic nationalism. Indeed, it can no longer be taken for granted that political institutions such as NATO will survive the present strains in recognizable form. When Mr. Callaghan intimated in October 1976 that Britain might not be able to support fully its present commitment to the Army on the Rhine unless its friends provided the financial backing which



**U. S. Imperialism: Chilean Fascist Troops Move Against Workers with U. S. Arms.**

\*Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development

\*\* Since the above was written, an OMA has been worked out between the U.S. and Japan for limiting the export of Japanese color TVs. According to the *New York Times*, the agreement was made under heavy threat of large U.S. protective tariffs. So even here, the "deal" acts as a mask for intensified contradiction.

is its due, he was uncomfortably close to opening a Pandora's Box for the Western Alliance.

This is hardly the language of a ruling class supremely confident in its perch atop the world or in the steadfastness of its allies.

### III. Trilateralism: "Partnership" for What?

This is the title of a recent article in *Foreign Affairs* by Richard H. Ullman, director of the CFR's 1980s project. He points out that this Rockefeller sponsored united front of advanced capitalist economies is extremely difficult if not impossible to achieve. The following factors enter into his argument:

a) The national interest of each capitalist power. Can it give up short-term gain at the others' expense for the long-range interest? Apparently not, as we have seen, at least not decisively.

b) The uneven effects of the OPEC "energy crisis."

c) Weakness of the military alliance. For a number of reasons, Japanese bosses are extremely reluctant to enter into a security treaty with the U.S. In Europe, "...the more highly politicized an issue, such as credits for the USSR or dealings with oil-producing states, the more likely it is that the separate national governments will remain central to the decision process. Yet these are issues for which centralization of decision may be highly desirable. And they are among the issues regarding which the proponents of trilateralism would seek to present a united front."

d) Trilateralism as a strategy for maintaining the U.S.-Western European-Japanese axis is exclusively an American invention. Will the other two sides of the triangle fall into place simply because the U.S. ruling class snaps its fingers?

e) Emergence of new secondary imperialist forces—i.e. Mexico, Brazil, India, Iran, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, etc. There will be points of unity but also plenty of conflict. Can the so-called trilateral alliance preserve a homogeneous policy toward these countries? Judging by the response to the oil crisis—with its spate of desperate bilateral deals since the OPEC boycott of 1973-4—the possibility hardly seems likely.

f) Differences with regard to policy vis-a-vis the Soviet imperialist bloc and the Chinese revisionists. Can the U.S. closely co-ordinate its USSR policy with, say, France or Italy? Can its China policy adequately reflect the interest of Japanese capital? The article argues in the negative. This point will be touched on more below. But for the time being it's enough to state that, despite what appears to be virtual unity within the old monied U.S. ruling class on the question of trilateralism, this unity does not go much beyond the U.S. borders other than superficially.

### IV. The Energy "crisis" and its potential for destroying the U.S.-Europe-Japan alliance.

The U.S. ruling class is in virtual unanimity about the grave dangers it faces in the area of

energy. Carter's energy "program"—unprecedented economic terrorism against the working class—and the recently released MIT study demonstrate that U.S. capitalism is gearing for energy shortages in the coming decade that will make the present inflation, service cutbacks, and unemployment appear like a picnic.

—Despite the fact that U.S. oil consumption in 1975 was about 5% below 1973, this did not mean decreased dependency on OPEC imports. On the contrary. Since the early 1970s, U.S. domestic production of oil and natural gas has declined. The net result is that U.S. oil imports rose from 4.7 mb/d in 1972 to 6.8 mb/d in the first half of 1976, with a pronounced shift within that total from non-Arab to Arab sources.

—Based on current projections, OECD's estimate is that it will have to import a total of 30.0 mb/d in 1980 as against 25.3 mb/d in 1974.

—The 2 mb/d that will flow from Alaska by 1980 are equivalent to no more than the rise of U.S. imports over the past four years.

—By the mid 1980s, OECD demand for OPEC oil is likely to match the exports that OPEC countries will be willing or able to make available for export.

—The price and production decisions made by the Saudi Arabian oil moguls will be the determining factor in either balancing oil supply or lurching toward another shortage. There is a tendency to view the Saudis as U.S. vassals (an argument made by the late J. Dann). However, this is one-sided. If there is unity, there is also conflict here. The Saudis have their own class interests to pursue. Their foreign exchange reserves (which zoomed from \$662 million in 1972 to \$24.6 billion in mid-1976) are 2/3 those of West Germany and one and one-half times those of the U.S. and Japan. When they raised their prices 5% at Qatar in December while other OPEC countries raised theirs 10%, the Saudis were acting in the interests of U.S. capital but in their own interests as well. Their huge accumulation of foreign reserves gives them a big stake in limiting the inflation rates of the industrial economies.

However, what will happen when supply and demand become roughly equal? According to Dankwart Rustow, a ruling class spokesman who teaches political science at CUNY, this should happen by the early or mid-1980s and it will bring with it a "major oil crisis." This finding dovetails with the recent MIT study.

It should be apparent that this development can only exacerbate relations between the "trilateral countries." As Rustow writes:

The implications for the American and OECD economies, and for relations between the U.S. and its allies, are only a shade less calamitous. The world economy did manage to absorb the oil price rises of 1973-4, but only at the cost of a major aggravation of the global recession, serious hardship in the weaker industrial economies such as Britain and Italy, and

acute suffering in many of the developing countries. The effects of a long-range shortage in the 1980s, with the demand for oil imports exceeding the amounts available from OPEC, and of accompanying price rises, would presumably be that much more serious.

- Consider the following pickle. U.S. im-
- ports from OPEC sources have risen from
- 1.4 mb/d in 1973 to 2.6 mb/d in 1976 or
- from 22% to 38% of the import total. The
- various industrial bourgeoisies set up an
- International Energy Agency in the wake
- of 1973-4 to try to pool oil in the event
- of another crisis. However, the way things
- are going, if the current trend continues,
- in even a moderate-growth context for
- OECD, U.S. oil imports by 1985 would be
- equivalent to virtually all the exports
- available from non-Arab OPEC members.

Rustow grossly understates the case when he writes:

...there is doubt that our West European and Japanese partners in the IEA would continue to support an arrangement that in effect asks them to underwrite both our Middle Eastern policy and our profligacy in the consumption of energy.

In this context, getting the "co-operation" of Western Europe and Japan is at best a risky business. Take Japan, for example. The Japanese bourgeoisie is confronted with a serious slowdown in economic growth. In the heyday of the Japanese boom, total investment in Japan was over 35% of GNP (gross national product), and investment in new plant and equipment alone was 25% of GNP. That 25% has now sunk to 13-14%.

All Japan's former boom industries—cars, shipbuilding, consumer electronics (except TV)—are facing stagnant demand at home. This is one reason why they are playing "dirty pool" on the international money market (according to their competitors) and why they are fighting with the U.S. and European bosses on the issue of trade restrictions.

Europe also has excess capacity in most of these industries. Ditto U.S.A. So it boils down to the classic confrontation: a big fight for the re-division of the world's markets in the context of rising new imperialist forces, zooming inflation, and an ever more difficult energy problem. Hardly the stuff of which long-term stability is made.

#### V. "Eurocommunism:" the first steps toward Soviet hegemony in Western Europe?

Much has been written on all sides of this question. Kissinger pointedly remarked once that the U.S. ruling class would not tolerate the presence of the French or Italian CP's in government.

Obviously, both of these parties are craven forces for revisionism. Berlinguer appears willing to sell himself to anyone. The French CP already showed what it would do when the chips

were down in 1968. In fact, Waldeck Rochet was to the right of De Gaulle on the question of NATO. His successor, Marchais, just contributed the brilliant theoretical gem about the "obsolete character" of the dictatorship of the proletariat. So U.S. imperialism is certainly not concerned about the possibility of a "red" Italy or France under this kind of leadership.

However, the problem of Western Europe drifting into the Soviet imperialist orbit after breaking away from a weakened U.S. definitely confronts the U.S. bourgeoisie. They have to be concerned about the consequences of "C" P participation in government.

Will the European ruling classes allow this participation in the first place? It seems that in the main, they will. Certain forces in France, represented by Chirac, seem more recalcitrant on this score. The same is true in Italy. But the main wing of both these bourgeoisies appears to be readying for some sort of "shared power" arrangement. In Italy, this is a virtual *fait accompli*.

Assuming that this phenomenon comes to pass in the near future, what does it mean? Will the participation of the CPs in government impel Western European capitalists to align themselves with the Soviets over a period of time? Will they remain junior partners of U.S. imperialism with a left cover? Will they break off from both super-imperialists and establish themselves as a "third force?"

The third hypothesis seems of all the most unlikely. They simply aren't strong enough.

In order to evaluate this phenomenon, we have to analyze its contradictions.

On the one hand, differences certainly exist within the various revisionist parties, both those directly dominated by Soviet imperialism and those of the western capitalist countries. A generation of Soviet imperialist superexploitation has obviously generated sharper class contradictions within the Eastern European client states. It has also most certainly established the bourgeoisies of these countries as forces with their own class interests that dovetail with, but also differ from, the interests of Soviet bosses.

Differences also exist between the Soviets and the French, Italians, etc. A major debate took place at the 1976 Berlin conference under the guise of "proletarian internationalism:" i.e. whether or not the Western Europeans would continue to pay unconditional homage to the Soviets. Naturally, the Europeans took exception to this. Marchais, Berlinguer and Co. have their own class interests.

So contradictions exist within the revisionist camp. A recent issue of *Le Monde Diplomatique* states:

(one wonders) if we are not on the threshold of a new split. Certain aspects of the debate that began last June among a number of CPs are reminiscent of the muted polemic that followed the 1960 international conference of CPs in Moscow and that led to the great split in the communist movement.

On the other hand, certain aspects of the debate also leave open the hypothesis that the experience of a two-fold error (the expulsion of the Yugoslav communists from the Cominform and the break with the Albanian and Chinese communists) will stimulate caution and hesitancy. In effect, for the time being, the polemic has been conducted only in the press; it has not been echoed by a single official declaration by leadership. Thus, for the moment, we are dealing with the establishment of a political compromise and an ideological polemic.

The question becomes: What is the main aspect—unity or conflict? The *Monde* article above seems to indicate the former. The bet here is that this estimate is correct.

Certain apologists for U.S. imperialism seem to feel that "Eurocommunism," if handled correctly by U.S. imperialism and European capitalists, will intensify the contradictions between the Soviets and the Eastern Europeans to the point of a break. This hardly seems likely. Towards whom would the Bulgarians, Poles, Czechs, etc., break? The U.S.? Remember Prague 1968.

For the time being and for the foreseeable future, the main aspect of Eurocommunism is the weakening of U.S. imperialist hegemony in Western Europe and the corresponding ascendancy of the Soviets. This is the contradiction being played out throughout the world, and, despite its historic relationship with U.S. imperialism, European capital is not immune to it.

#### VI. What Lies Ahead?

At the time of *Road to Revolution III*, the party made the estimate that this was the period of wars and revolutions. Although superficially this analysis may have appeared far-fetched at the time, events over the past few years seem to confirm it.

The world is in a state of great instability. This instability characterizes virtually every institution and alliance. It characterizes particularly those institutions and alliances that are weakening rather than growing stronger. The bourgeoisies of the so-called Trilateral countries must be hedging their bets and considering their options. Another recent issue of *Le Monde* analyzes the London talks in the starkest possible terms:

For the first time in a conference of this type, one Prime Minister (Mr. Fukuda) raised the question: In the last analysis, aren't the difficulties faced by market-economy countries greater than those faced in 1930—given that the North-South problem and East-West competition are now added to the economic and financial disorder? One can readily understand the reasons for which the head of the Japanese government advanced these pessimistic ideas: his country is the first target of American and European protectionist measures. Nonetheless, the specter of the collapse of their

old system had plenty in it to send a shudder through the world powers who met in London.

U.S. bosses, like others, must be rethinking their strategy. This is apparent in South Africa. It seems apparent in Korea, where they appear to have decided to shrink their perimeter. Sulzberger, who does not dispute the Carter decision to withdraw from South Korea, writes of its consequences:

Two symposia on Korean security were held by joint United States, South Korean and Japanese experts last January in Seoul and Tokyo. These concluded... 'No responsible observers, either in Korea or Japan, with the exception of certain leftwing members of the leftwing faction of the Japanese opposition parties, favor a reduction in the United States military presence in Korea.'

Japanese participants warned withdrawal would be militarily and politically 'destabilizing' and might force Japan either to move toward Communism or, at the other extreme, to start a 'large-scale rearmament program.'

It would seem that European capitalists will have to think long and hard before they decide to throw in their lot with the U.S. forever. From the above, the same must be true of the Japanese.

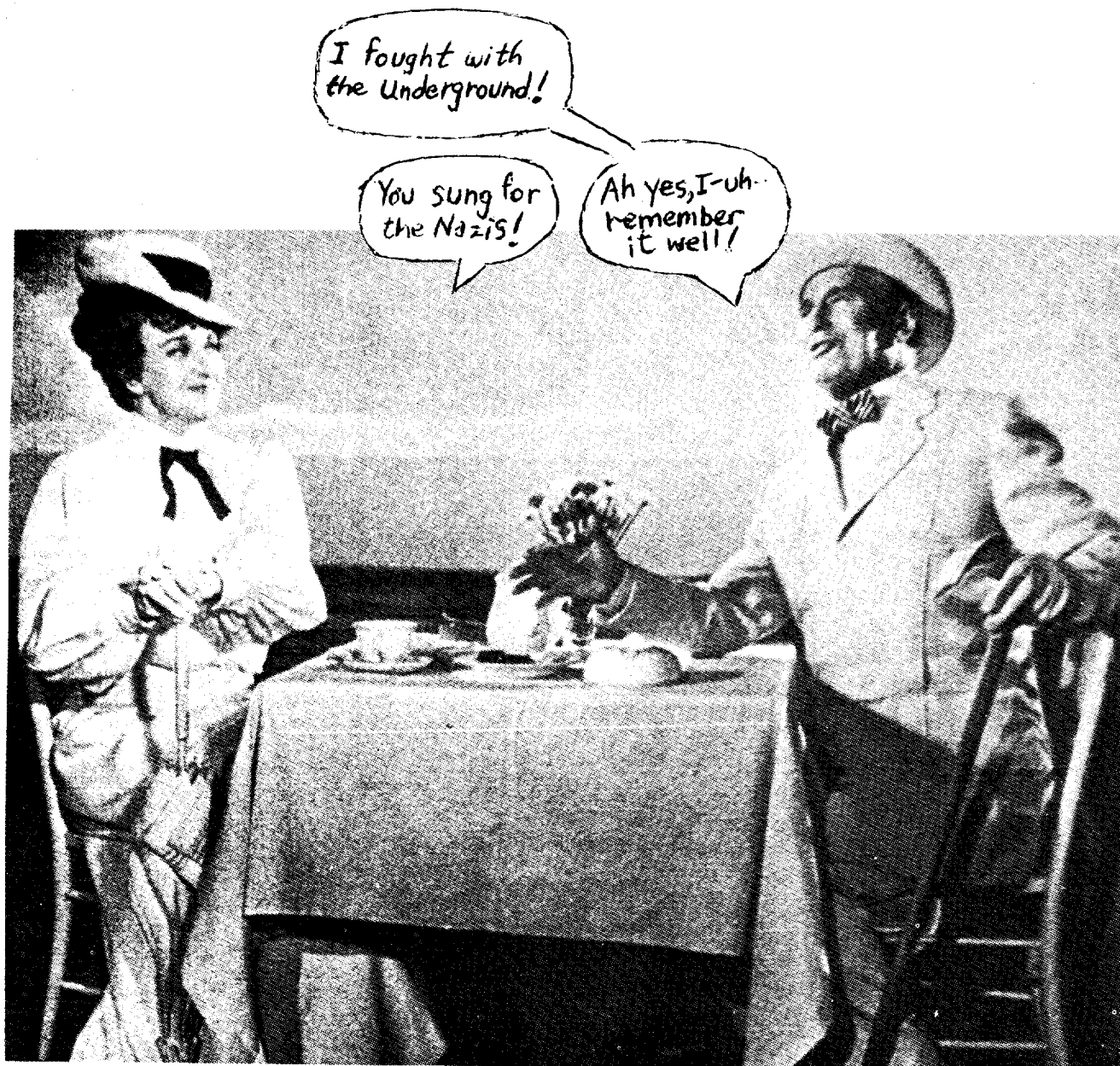
The belief here is that both these forces will begin to drift away from the U.S. orbit and toward the Soviets in the coming period.

By the same token, the U.S. must consider the alternative of moving more rapidly to cement an alliance with the Chinese revisionists, who control for the moment what will be the world's greatest potential market.

The situation is clearly very complicated and it will be characterized by many ups and downs. Nonetheless, one conclusion appears inescapable: U.S. imperialism is rapidly becoming the weak link in the chain of world capitalism.

This means that a small party such as ours can, by diligently applying its line and by organizing among the industrial working class, make an enormous difference in the overall development of world contradictions. This more than anything else seems to be the major variable factor in the structure of global instability and the inevitable drift toward world war. Events are moving rapidly toward war and fascism. We have the ability to carry out our line, to master them, and to build revolution out of the ashes of U.S. imperialist decline.

## FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM!



## the last word

Q: How do you feel about the coming elections?

Willie Sutton: These Republicans are just out of touch with the people. They just don't know what the people need or what problems little people have. I don't think they really care. But now you take this Jimmy Carter. Well, I've been around some of the best confidence men in the business and I've never seen a bigger confidence man in my life. I mean it. They call this country a democracy but I call it an hypocrisy.

From a pre-presidential election interview with bank robber Willie Sutton, in the **Village Voice** (9/13/76).

With Roving Armed Pickets

## SHUT DOWN ALL MINES!

With the approach of the Dec. 6th deadline, several thousand miners were leaving the pits in advance of the nation-wide soft-coal strike involving 150,000 members of the United Mine Workers (UMW). While "negotiations" continued to drag on between the BCOA (Bituminous

Coal Operators Association) and the UMW "leaders," the mass solidarity of the rank and file prevented any sellout extension of the contract. "No contract, no work" rules the roost in the coal fields from Pennsylvania through Illinois and down to Alabama.

THE RANK-AND-FILE MINERS WERE striking for the right to strike itself. Since the last contract they have wildcatted nationally three times to prevent themselves from being "arbitrated to death" by the rules set up be-

(Continued on page 3)

# CHALLENGE

*The Revolutionary Communist Newspaper*

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

DECEMBER 15, 1977—Volume 14, Number 29

IOC

## BOSSSES' COURT FREES KILLER COP



BKLYN., N.Y.—Committee Against Racism and PLP march against the acquittal of racist killer cop Robert Torsney. For full story, see page 3.

## 14 Years of Revolutionary Journalism

(See Editorial)